

Adriana Dana Listeş Pop

**The Incredible World in a
Dead Man's Skull**

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2007: *Charismatic Cluj City Dwellers*, Eikon Publishing House, volume of interviews with local personalities, Romanian language, Master Dissertation for the Faculty of Political Sciences, Administrative and Communication, Journalism and Digital Media Department, UBB Cluj-Napoca.

2015: *Introduction into the Works of Ioan Petru Culianu. The System of Thought*, prefaced by prof. univ. dr. Peter Gross, doctoral theses managed by prof. univ. dr. Ştefan Borbely, Faculty of Letters, UBB, Romanian language, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House. Volume awarded with the Literary Critics Prize for the Publishing Year 2015, Octavian Goga County Library.

2016: *Transtextuality and Liminality in Ioan Petru Culianu's Prose*, literary critics volume, Romanian language, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House.

2016: *Tongues of Flames and Other Stories*, urmuzian short stories, English language, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House.

2016: *Silvestris Animalterra and Carton Mazeotopia*, urmuzian short stories, English language, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House.

2019: *Reclaiming the Earth (Recumintirea pământului)*, fantasy novellas, Romanian language, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House.

2020: *Ulpila*, historical novel, Romanian language, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House.

2021: *Murthug the Wanderer (Murthug Rătăcitorul)*, historical novel, volume I, Romanian language, Casa Cărții de Știință, Publishing House.

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A MEDIEVAL URMUZIAN TALE

It was early Middle Ages when an unusual archaeological discovery surprised the global audience. Certainly, not all the public found out about it, only the Pontifex Maximus with his Holy See which was ruling the world back then, together with numerous royal courts. The rest of the population, fortunately still not forcefully subjected to mass education, had the possibility of wearing subtle causal chains tied to an oscillating circular stake cast from irony and lead in a three-dimensional negative impression. That peculiar stake was buried in the rural ground where the peasants lived, by being decently poured through a blessed sprue.

The process of being subjugated by informal fallacy and tautology took all the time in their animated lives. While occupied with this righteous activity, they were mumbling: "I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me". Consequently, they despised earthly life as the Pope and his cardinals instructed them faithful souls. Only the after-life in the heavens was important to them, where splendour and

delight were promised to be never-ending. They were afraid to do anything selfish, so they would gladly suffer oppression in order to expiate the Peccatum Originale, thus rightfully earning their place in heaven.

The masters could do nothing to change this deeply rooted belief. Finally, they were obliged to accept it by lifting one hand in the air and waving it for eight hours on Good Friday night, while standing up in their palace balconies. Right in the time knot where the late antiquity joined feudalism, a new link was introduced in the infinite chronological chain hanging down from the sky. This link was purely metallic, but not at all round as one would expect. Quite contrarily, it had trapezoidal shape and it had to be welded by a team of one thousand workers hanging upside down from above.

A hundred tones of ore had to be melted and cast to produce the huge temporal link and join it vertically along the timeline grid. With the new trapezoidal link, a new duration was added to the chronological value of becoming. Even Prince Labar TUR-ma Kubaba was amazed by the unprecedented discovery. Exactly in that night, the prince had a terrible nightmare. He was right there, chasing the ghost of the last pharaoh listed in the XIII-th dynasty in his personal ancient royal tomb.

Actually, it was the prince himself who discovered the mummy. Irritated by the multiple appearances into his dreams where the pharaoh always broke in completely uninvited, Labar TUR-ma went on a secret trip to Egypt to personally investigate the matter. Each night after two o'clock, the pharaoh's ghost showed itself packed in an infinite roll of white bandages and sat himself down right near Labar TUR-ma's head.

More than that, seeing that the prince intentionally ignores his graceful presence, the ghost would launch a series of smelly farts directly into his majesty's royal nose. In this situation, in vain could the prince pretend he doesn't see or feel the stinky presence. Turning on the other side to the wall, the prince would continue the night faking loud snoring. Surely, the ghost knew that the prince was awake, reason why he would utter an endless monotonous discourse about the duty of a royal offspring, no matter the space where located in a certain moment in time.

Losing sleep, the prince got irritated, stealing more rest during daytime duty. Still not getting enough, his nose began to grow longer and thicker. In no time, the majestic nose looked like a green bell pepper. Covering it with a mask, the prince left for Egypt that very night, while the guards were playing cards on the hallway. The

ghost felt extremely satisfied about the journey undertaken by the prince, finally visiting the place where the whole royal family originated thousands of years ago.

When the prince got there, he crawled under the lateral wall of the oldest pyramid and got inside the vast tomb. It was dark inside. Nevertheless, his green nose was shiny enough to illuminate the way. He jumped over treacherous traps, avoided numerous pools of water, long swords fallen from the ceilings and finally arrived in the main burial chamber.

Already used to the smell, he tied his nose around with a rope hanging from above and began to unroll the bandages counting to one million. Then he saw the mummy with the skin all dried, hair long and greyish. He spat three times in each direction, uttering chants for protection. In that moment, the skull of the mummy grew larger and opened itself, absorbing the prince within, carried away by a stormy ocean.

RIA TEMEN-KUG

Labar TUR-ma Kubaba entered a thunderous whirl of salty water, turning him upside down numerous times, till he started to puke and lose his consciousness. When he woke up, he noticed he's smaller and thinner, even younger. Moreover, his sex was changed, as he became a little girl around eight years old named Ria Temen-Kug, shortly Ria. Labar couldn't believe how small his hands had become, but he was happy the green nose disappeared. Now he could move quicker, he felt lighter and the daily sadness hanging above his head like a wax pear went away. All he wanted to do now was to play. He would have liked to play with some dolls or a rubber duck, but he couldn't find anything around.

Realizing he is somebody else, he looked around to see where he was taken. He was lying down on an Egyptian bed carved in fossil black marble remained from the Paleozoic era. In those times, an entire population of Ammonites Goniatites and Orthoceras shells buried themselves during a collective suicide religious sacrifice. They did it in discontent with the uncontrollable movement of the continental platforms

which reshaped the terrestrial surface. The bed was sustained by four tiger-legged stone poles.

Under his head, there was a jade pillow which spread a misty warm light, while chirping like a chorus of birds. On the wall, there was a painting with three buttons - two white, one red and a snake head. The snake was long and his body was connected to one side of the bed. It moved slowly, as if drunk with honey-sweetened wine and cherries.

There was a milky light around Labar TUR-ma Ria, rather dim and somehow greenish. He found himself in a cubicle of porous masonry with no windows and no doors. Nevertheless, strange beings came in and out unnoticed from all sides, sliding through the walls, as if unreal or of no consistency. Labar TUR-ma Ria shouted out loud three times, terribly shocked and annoyed by the constant movement of the strange beings passing through the walls.

Nobody paid attention to him and his sharp acoustic signals. Frustrated, Labar TUR-ma Ria crushed a tomato on the left side of his head, patriotically singing "Yon Keepur". A needle was inserted into his girlish right hand and he fell asleep. When he woke up, he was in the same bed, as small as he had been last time and still girly. Losing hope to ever get back to the initial shape, Labar

TUR-ma Ria told himself he had to be patient to grow up and see what can be done to find his mother. Slowly, he started to remember what happened after losing consciousness.

KAMADME PA RUDAIN

Labar TUR-ma Ria remembered the wind was howling, raising huge waves as high as hills, falling upon him, boiling and thundering. He was sailing on a medieval wooden ship, not bigger than a truck. Caught by waves, the ship turned to one side, hanging above the watery abyss opened to swallow it. The mast broke, cracking and pounding deafeningly. *The boat died*, he thought. A wall of water fell, drowning everything, silencing Labar. Darkness. Salty taste. Fish. He yearned for sweet water in vain, rising through the bottomless shores, not sure if dead or alive.

When he woke up, he found himself almost buried in the sand on a deserted shore. In the distance, a row of yellow rocks could be seen. Labar got up, stumbling and walking in a daze, when he came across a grove where he took shelter for a while. With difficulty, he dragged his feet to the nearest settlement, slipping into a muddy ditch, flooded with water, like a soft bed.

He woke up suddenly, someone was shaking his shoulder. He didn't know where he was. It was a thin old woman, dressed in a long, black, flared, fluffy dress.

She saw him starving, dry with thirst, and broken with cold, fatigue and while shaking him strongly, muttered something:

- ... Where you from?
- A-pa-ru ... Where am I ...?
- Kamadme Pa Rudain.
- Papa-ruda? replied him incoherently.

Her eyes began to burn strangely, revealing the hideousness of her emaciated face. Her hand grew huge, with long, large, iron claws, thrusting it into his head, crushing the skull, squashing his brain. The old woman opened her mouth wide and took a deep bite of his numb neck. He could feel her metallic teeth and claws ripping through the flesh and bones, shattering them. Blood flowed in waves in the muddy ditch, collapsed on its sides.

Labar TUR-ma Ria closed his eyes, struggling to hide in a small cave, like the hollow of a dead tree. When he reopened them, he was in a kind of house, small, low, narrow, humble. There was a faint smell of old masonry coming out of the walls, saddening and sickening him. He has never heard of this island of Pa Rudain. Trying to comprehend what was being said, each third word it seemed to him that he understood something. Labar looked around, he could see a lot of raw green grass,

melting in a thick, thick fog. The sky was cloudy, leaden, scattering a dark glow.

Two women passed by what was left of the burnt fence, ignoring its hideous condition. Charred stumps, thorns and carbonised timber made it look like being inherited from the Trojan War or remained there since the last officially recorded flood. Their sharp noses, crushed under the weight of the thick-rimmed glasses, made their way to the front of the house. They reached the entrance door, knocking tactfully, peering through the squares of the windows. He didn't open it, cautiously hiding upstairs. They had called to him in soft voices, smiling kindly. Seeing that he didn't show up, they started screaming.

Long, sharp knives came out of their mouths, used to cut the wooden door. They rushed inside, furiously looking for him. He was hiding behind the closet, immersed in himself, in a bubble of salty water and molecules of half-breathed oxygen. A werewolf passed by him, running quickly. He saw the werewolf's huge, curved paw, dressed in grey fur, stained with orange droplets, but the hideous creature disappeared in no time, leaving behind a feeling of terror and awe that tortured Labar TUR-ma Ria.

A school of fish floated in front of him, covering his heart like a porthole. He wanted to swallow the fish,

but they were almost invisible, tasting of salty tears cried by too many people over the years. It was getting dark. The two old haggy creatures had left, treading lightly, glancing warmly around, hiding their destructive teeth. He was immersed in the ocean floor like in a baptism of death. It was as if he was carrying all the seas and oceans inside him, pouring them over the world again. The miasma of the living death pushed everything into a future that was once, relentlessly spinning around in a dance of the implacable destructive void. Here is the story of his amazing adventures experienced in the incredible world existing in a dead man's skull, initially scribbled down on a long string of sea shells, hanging on his neck. Of course he had no idea about the inscribed sea shells, simply because they were invisible.

When the prince realized he is a little girl now and he could do nothing about it than wait, he tried hiding Labar's inner self deep inside the little girl's bowels, till the moment he could be himself again. In a second, the one who was being himself right there whispered to the one who used to be: "It's a cursed place. There is a lot of hatred around, sinister appearances out of their own destructive thoughts, hidden in the reminiscence of throes, eradicated by a living death that penetrates matter, air, flesh". The little girl's hair got instantly white.

QUEEN KUBABA NIN-EGAL

Generally, Labar TUR-ma Ria felt more like a little girl than a mature man. In those moments, he indulged in eating lots of candies and chocolate, playing strings with his fingers, singing Hickory Dickory Dock. He liked to create lots of string figures like Sawing Wood and Spider Web. When being more of a girl, Labar TUR-ma Ria remembered that her mother was an evil old woman, otherwise he obviously wouldn't care about her at all. This hag never liked to eat toast bread and butter, she could only drink red tea with Ossenworst Steak Tartare.

Her humble servants named the tea sort Bloody Nemur, as she preferred it mixed with white baby dolphin's tears and honey. When thirsty, she was squirming her cheeks to the right, with eyes goggled to signal she needed fresh tears from the most recent dolphin's crying spells. In that particular spacetime dimension, dolphins were considered plants, reason why, for Wester, they were buried with their beaks down in the ground, to invoke rain.

Each Sunday, the Queen regularly requested to be served fresh dove egg omelette fried in baby-whale

lard. When she was very weak due to her advanced age and chronological decomposition, the diabolical servants used to bring her an orphaned dolphin to mutely cry in front of her. Right on the spot, they harvested fresh tears meant to revive her almost one hundred percent.

Lately, she enjoyed to lie down in bed mimicking a springing fountain, precisely a H89 cm classic tiered fountain drained through a ten meters rubber cable, UV and frost defiant. Terrified to lose their jobs, the servants and the doctors did everything in their power to please her, things so ridiculous, that nobody could even imagine. Often delirious, the Queen would scream repeatedly:

– Milk the clouds! Bring me water from the sky!

No servant could understand what she really wanted. How could someone milk the clouds? Do the clouds have milk, like cows and goats? The Royal Council urgently met to debate the matter. After hours of reciting individual monologues with their eyes closed, the Royal Councillors decreed a new official law in rhyme:

Cloudy milk
Helpful tilk
Prolong human life
Milk your tea

Learn how to pilk
Only the Queen
Can drink magic bilk
Her humble servants
Know-how
To Beal
Who dares to steal
From her Majesty?
Banished be
To the Red Sea!

Since that day, half of the royal servants were obliged to sit down on a log with buckets on their heads, imitating milking movements with their raised hands up to the sky. Because no milk was falling into the buckets, they began to fear for their lives. Desperate, one of them stole milk from an indifferent cow, mixed it with moon rays, star dust and fluffy cloud particles and gave it to the Queen's First Butler. In a few minutes, the Queen got better and stronger, jumping on bed with her head upside down, shaking legs. After four hours, she fell asleep for three days and three nights, snoring rhythmically in Fixed Do key notation, hanging from the crystal chandelier.

Reduced to the state of a vegetal dolphin due to her favourite menu, the Queen talked incoherently every other Tuesday. Lately, she demanded to be replaced by a Hollyhood iStar Oars Clone for her chancellery work. In the meantime, she could talk to her songhter Ria. Being an unidentifiable gender, the Queen named her child songhter. Last month, the proud child entered a strike, pretending to be dumb and deaf. Instead of talking, songhter wore a wooden board on her body inscribed with ancient, not-yet decoded characters:

“GDW alarm – Throw this vegetable out IMMEDIATE-LY! Stop betraying your country by spreading disinformation about unfortunate, naive vegetables!

Unhappy about this rude behaviour, the Queen walked in the royal apartments blindfolded, screaming out loud:

– Beware! Blind old woman passing! Ally Baba, Baba Ghanoush! BaBa Oar-ba! accompanied by a squadron of traffic cops. Irritated by her refusal to acknowledge, Labar TUR-ma Ria found a paranormal solution to an entirely normal situation.

– Mom, dol-phins, members of the Cetacea Dolfinea Roosea family, are cute animals made of flesh and blood, the songhter telepathically conveyed.

– No, they are definitely white tomatoes animated by suspicious dynamics or by their own curiosity! They are poisonous vegetables that should be banished from the face of the Earth! replied the Queen climbing on walls.

– They are not!

– They are!

– They are not!

– They are! Where is my inflatable frog? she stamped her leg three times, really annoyed.

Next day, a new law was officially recorded on the SST, the Singing Stone Tablet, measuring one square kilometre:

Hereby we decree
Dolphins are ludicree
White tomatoes
Hated potatoes
Stubborn poetoes
Shouldn't confess
Anything less
Vegetables for sure
Sing an overture!

Accordingly, the Queen was celebrated as the best professional in Kung Fu against ghosts she pretended was fighting on a nightly basis. In a public festivity, she was granted a hereditary salute of twenty-one guns in recognition for her imposing stature. Euphorically, she demanded to ice skate on a rink made from frozen sharks, singing in coloratura soprano's vocal range two octaves above middle C, higher than 1046 Hz:

– I want a singing-dancing fridge! I want a bathroom in my bedroom, right on top of it! I want a blue loo. And a porcelain hyena from Vienna!

Songhter ignored her wishes sitting on his head, while crunching carrots.

– Nobody gives me what I want! I am so miserable! the Queen broke into tears.

Labar TUR-ma Ria realized he couldn't oppose his mother anymore. Disappointed and tired of playing charades, he ran away to Egypt researching the Near-Death Experiences and After-Death Phenomena, also known as NDE & ADP. He was curious about what is to be found there, and where do humans go after they stop breathing for whatever reason, intended or not.

Little did he know that there was a Great Wizard living in Antaluma, the land of the half-scorpion, half-

human people, roaming through the Purple Desert. Being cursed centuries ago by a dying child, the prince was doomed to be followed by the pharaoh's ghost during night-time and by the Great Wizard Darfur during daytime, to take revenge and rebalance the scales of destiny. Watching him through a crystal globe, the Great Wizard Darfur would sing various chants and magic formulas to change him into most unusual shapes, then instantly transport him to strange worlds.

Each morning, the Great Wizard prayed to goddess Nin-Sun-Zi, the Reliable Wild Cow. Her statue was adored in an invisible temple raised in the Apsu Mountains, where ordinary mortals weren't allowed to get in. It was strictly forbidden, but they couldn't enter simply because they weren't able to see it, in the first place. In the evening, the wizard worshipped god Min, the giant booted Lord of the Eastern Desert, ruling over the Upper and the Lower world. Of course, Great Wizard Darfur imitated Min's left hand raising whenever unsure about something. Frightened to pronounce his name, Darfur called the god "He whose arm is raised in the East". Undoubtedly, the greatest sin against Min was to eat lettuce.

CHEDDAR DICTATORSHIP

Bored to death with the regular procedures of the secular routine, the Great Wizard Darfur uttered a witchcraft. Right in that moment, Labar TUR-ma Ria was walking down the street, admiring the landscape. Distracted, he fell into a young pithole in the sidewalk and landed in a new dimension. He felt his body was changed and, when looking at his hands, he realized they turned into furry clawed paws. The tragic truth was that the wizard transformed him into a mouse. Therefore, now he lived in Mousala, a place where only mice could live.

– All right, no problem, I will eat only cheese from now on, reflected the prince, trying to encourage himself and overcome the emotions of the last major change.

Actually, it was easier saying than doing it. He decided to take a walk and see how mice live there. He had to learn their customs and traditions, now that he was on his own, no adviser to tell him what to say and what to do. The prince went outside his private personal hole, quickly stepping on his four paws, carefully

looking to the left and to the right. He saw beautiful nature, the air was a bit stinky, but otherwise it was nice. Roaming curiously wherever he liked, the prince got hungry.

– I am hungry, I need food, the prince said, but nobody answered.

– I need food, he screamed again, stamping one paw.

No answer again. The prince started to cry because whenever he felt hungry, he just had to say it out loud and food would appear out of nowhere. That wasn't the case right now and the mouse panicked. How could he get some food? As he was sitting down there, crying in despair, a doe mouse was passing by.

– Why are you crying? she asked.

– I'm hungry.

– So, why are you crying?

– Nobody gets me food.

– What do you mean?

– Whenever I am hungry, I say it out loud and food comes.

– Really?

– Really.

– That is quite unbelievable.

– Why? I am telling the truth.

– You think food is everywhere for free, to be taken whenever someone feels hungry?

– Yes, that's what I think. What else can be done when one is hungry?

– Not in this country, my friend. Here you have to earn your food.

– Earn my food? That is most unusual. But what can I do? I will earn my food then. How?

– Come with me, said the doe mouse. I am Dutu Mus Musculus.

She took him to a huge building consisting of narrow intertwined corridors. At the end of them, there were cupboards containing cheese slices.

– I like chit-chat, but I am really hungry now. What do I have to do? he asked in awe. Do I go up there and help myself with some delicious cheese?

– Shut up, that would be too easy. Yes, you go there, but first you have to calculate the hypotenuse of a triangular slice of cheese.

– What is a hypotenuse? Ten hippos to use?

– No, there are no hippos here. They are huge and we are so small! Are you retarded? asked Dutu.

– Not that I know. I mean, nobody told me I could be. So what do I have to calculate, guess or find?

– Pay undivided attention – the hypotenuse is the longest side of a right-angled triangle, located exactly on the opposite side of the right angle.

– What? asked the prince.

– I was talking about the hypotenuse. And don't forget, the cheese has to be only cheddar and the slice compulsorily in the shape of a right triangle.

– I know what a triangle is! the mouse prince jumped for joy on his four paws. It's a French type of marriage!

– What on Earth are you talking about?

– French love triangle, isn't it? The prince smiled happily.

– No! Are you from another planet? It's a geometrical figure, like the circle or the square.

– A geometrical figure.... the mouse was thinking hard, two paws on his head. Never heard of it ...

– Never heard of a geometrical figure, you saying?

– Yep, never heard of it.

– Didn't you go to school when you were a child?

– No, are you out of your mind? The school came to me.

– I see, no doubt about it. Tragedy, it seems you will starve.

– What? Why? he said, staring motionless at her.

– That's the law here. Only those who can calculate the hypotenuse of a triangular slice of cheese can eat.

– Is this a joke? Where I come from, the most ignorant and uneducated people eat more.

– Really?

– Yes, undoubtedly.

– Aha, and what world is that?

– The world of the humans.

– The huge biped creatures who set traps for us?

– Aaaaa, if you say it like that, it sounds different to me, too...

– Yeah, they set traps with small bites of cheese, to catch and kill our mousekind. What do they have against us?

– Actually, I have no idea. I myself never set up any trap.

– And these creatures eat a lot, without being necessary to calculate, count or think at all?

– Yes, the less they think, the more they eat.

– Unbelievable. I will not believe it till I see it with my own eyes.

– Is your name Tomma?

– Yeah, Dutu Tomma Mus Musculus. How did you know?

– There was a guy who could not believe anything till he saw it with his very own eyes. His name was Tom the Unfaithful, or the One Who Could Not Believe.

– Till he put his own finger onto the wound.

– Yes, Jesus' wound. How did you know?

– Of course I know, I went to school.

– Do the mice have schools?

– Sure, and academia.

– For real?

– For real. And they teach us lots of things like equations, chemical formulas, physics, algebra.

– Never heard of them. What are these, types of menus?

– You only think about food, don't you? Let's calculate the slice of cheese and I will let you eat it all by yourself. Just pay attention.

She started to mumble a long formula, repeating it while moving her little paws:

– A squared plus B squared equals C squared.

– Are you repeating your ABC? I know it very well.

– No, it is Pythagoras' formula.

– A squared plus B squared equals C squared?
This is Pythagoras' formula?

– Yes, it comes handy when calculating the hypotenuse of a triangle.

– There you go mentioning the triangle again.
You are a naughty girl.

– Give me a break, dumbbell, I am working hard right now for you to eat.

– Thank you, appreciate it. If I could, I would take you to my world, but not as a mouse, preferably as a human female.

– I would be enchanted to come with you.

She typed on a little screen the size of the hypotenuse and the cupboard opened by itself with a click. A slice of cheddar fell down and the mouse prince grabbed it in a hurry, swallowing it immediately.

– What a strange world, to do maths before each meal. Most of my friends would starve to death.

– I have no doubts about it.

– But you are very smart.

– Nothing to do with it. We have to respect the law inherited from the first ruler, and so on.

– You mean this law is old?

– Ancient. When the first mouse set foot on this land, he created this law to try to control the greed.

– I see. Weird things happen here.

– Well, everybody here knows how to calculate the hypotenuse. But the smarter ones are able to estimate the average size of the cheese roll the slice was cut away from.

– Amazing. And do they become leaders in your society?

– Some of those who want it. But those who don't, they receive the whole cheese roll for themselves.

– Strange world indeed.

– It seems now the younger generation is lazier and they want to change the ancient law. Their leader is called Anonymouse and he is quite popular.

– Good idea. Will they start a Revolution? They are right, things need to change around here.

– Maybe. The younger mice say this is a dictatorial society ruled in terror by the head of the state.

– Who is the head of the state?

– A doe mouse as old as Noah.

– Amazing. Like my mom. What a surprising coincidence ...

– Indeed.

– What's her name?

– Mousoleuma Neoptoleuma Hallicarnassusa.

– That is a long name. Hard to remember.

– Not easy, but I learned to repeat it countlessly without fault.

– Good if you can. But I can't.

– No need to overheat your brain, or it might crack.

– God forbid. I guess this is a dictatorial society.

– They call it Cheddar Dictatorship.

– In my world, they all fight for gas.

– Is that a Gas Dictatorship?

– Could be, but nobody is calling it this way.

They prefer to call it democracy.

– We had mouseocracy, too, till the witch hag climbed up there. Now we can't put her down, she is supported by numerous crooks who sell expensive cheese to her company. Then she sells it to the state with added price to make profit.

– Doesn't sound good at all. A war could break out anytime.

– Yes, that's the worst case scenario. We can't afford a war now, too many mice will die. They have feline bombs, huge cats to unleash destruction on our population.

– Huge cats? I don't like the sound of it, not while being a helpless mouse. As a human, I have cats at home, but they are smaller than me, no danger.

- Traitor, you have cats! How could you?
- When I go back, I will send all the cats away.

They terrify me now.

- Do that. Do you feel better after eating?
- Better. Let's go find a hole to hide in.

They disappeared inside an ovoid niche cut within a brick wall and never came back out on that side of history again.

GAINARI

Next day, Labar TUR-ma Ria woke up being a man again, but certainly not himself, as he had the skin burnt by sunshine and dark eyes. He was happy to find himself in a stronger body of a middle-aged gypsy man from Transylvania. As you can imagine, there was no work for an adult gypsy man in the urban society, so he had to get by living in a village, stealing quite regularly to be able to make it till the next day. One night, being extremely hungry, Gainar thought how to get some food. Together with his friends, based on an ingenious idea, they devised an elaborate plan to steal the fattest chickens in the villages around. One of them owned an old rusty car, stolen from somewhere. They heard there was a man living by the river who had huge hens, as large as turkeys. They weighed five kilos each, or maybe even more, beautiful egg-laying creatures endowed with succulent, delicious flesh to be devoured in a pot of hot soup.

Terribly hungry and not being able to think about something else than the delicious sweetness of the chicken meat boiled in a fresh, green parsley flavoured

soup, Gainar decided it's the right time to strike. After midnight, they travelled from a nearby village to the place where the large hens were kept in a hen coop. The lady-chickens were happy roaming around freely, helping themselves with fresh grass roots, worms, small bugs, besides the daily cereal portion served by the master.

There was a Plofkip rooster among them, whose main mission was to guard the ladies. As the gracious winged females realized, the rooster was a sexual abuser and an aggressive dictator who violently raped them whenever he got the slightest opportunity. He didn't even care that the other ladies, the master or the passers-by were looking at him while doing it. Consequently, the hens learned to run faster and faster, trying to keep away from him, no matter how delicious the worm he offered could be.

That night, the ladies were sleeping all together and the rooster was dreaming close to his favourite mistress, just like king Solomon used to do in his royal harem. The banty cockerel was dreaming he was in love with a young, beautiful princess named Rusaia. She was perfect in every way and she had a pretty haystack of yellow feathers on her head. She was pretty, coy and

delicate, they way an educated blue-blooded princess should be.

Still dreaming, he woke up suddenly, right before getting closer to the attractive princess. The Plofkip rooster realized his favourite mistress wasn't there anymore. More than that, his harem was halved, many ladies being absent. Enraged, the rooster got out to see what's happening. He saw a strong light coming from a noisy creature and two men grabbing his ladies, stuffing them in a sack. Right in that moment, the master got out of the house. The thieves disappeared in the noisy, blinding creature and his master came to check on the damages. It was truly a disaster, six of the fattest ladies were taken away and four others lied down lifeless on the ground. They were attacked by the ferocious mongrel dog arrived with the thieves.

Gainar was happy next day when one fat, delicious chicken was boiling in his pot, on his very own oven. He ate it chewing slowly, sucking the marrow out of each bone, sloshing leisurely. Troubled, the master went to the Police station next day and reported the matter, blackened with grief and distress. In a few days, Gainar was arrested and handcuffed by two Police officers and was taken down to the custody cells for 29 days. Investigating, Police discovered the video footage of Gainar and his friends

while rolling on the county road. There was CCTV, closed-circuit-television, surveillance cameras the thieves weren't aware of, cameras which proved their route from one village to another.

Now it was Gainar's turn to get black with sadness, worriment and resentment, finding himself in a small, dark cell with his friend and other two guys. Eating bread and cheese, he was waiting patiently to be taken up to the surface to court, hoping to get half of the time to serve, if admitting the guilt. The sweet taste of the chicken turned bitter in his mouth now that he realized the high price he had to pay for it. A deep worrying thought caused a neurological shock, followed by a chemical unbalance in his brain and Gainar began to scream out loud:

– Cock-a-doodle-do, Cock-a-doodle-do!, fluttering his hands like cockerels do.

He thought he was a rooster. Then he attacked the other prisoners, shouting out that he was taking over the cells, colonizing them with his rooster micro-clones. Everybody should obey him or they would be killed one by one, after being forced to drink their own blood. An emergency crew came, put him in a straitjacket and took him away.

IBS IN AMMONIDA BUCK TERRA

Troubled by a nasty stomach pain and in bad mood, Great Wizard Darfur sent Labar to Ammonida Buck Terra spacetime dimension. A universe *per se*, this mysterious world was located inside the belly of an ancient god, forgotten by the Church Patriarchs in the Christian Calendar under the name of Saint Ammon. No human or wizard has ever been there before, mainly impossible because of the remoteness and difference in structure. As you can imagine, Ammonida was a distant planet.

Since the dawn of the human civilization, people peeped at stars and wished to fly there. Therefore, they thought stars are gods and waited patiently for thousands of years to be able to reach them. Initially, Ammon was a giant cephalopod aged 400 million years old, swimming in the infinite Cosmic Ocean. He was part of the Ammonoidea family. Ammon looked like a snake coiled around himself, covered by a chambered planispiral shell for protection. He had eight arms to handle all the stages of development he was supposed to go through. Growing continuously, he had to move

his curled body in a new chamber within the shell, sealing off the former cavern with septa walls.

After the waters of the Cosmic Ocean retreated, Ammon got petrified, floating motionless in the vast Cosmos. Inside him, a whole world existed, striving to survive despite all hardships. This world was called Ammonida. Dark, humid and invaded by mucus, the inner duct of the obsolete god was a secret environment that hosted billions of entities which called themselves Buck T Ria.

Controlled by the GBAX, the inner system was a tubular structure in the size of a cosmic Boa constrictor nicknamed Cher Poikier. Ammonida community was not aware of the fact that they were controlled and spied upon through the CN X cable connected to the Ammon's brain. Landing there one Saturday evening, Labar TUR-ma Ria found a complete chaos in an infinite dark, smelly space.

Billion creatures of all sizes and shapes were crawling, swimming, floating, bumping into each other. Ammonida Buck T Ria community was noisy and conflictual. There was constant rivalry between the beneficial organisms and the destructive ones. Labar's code name was IBS. His secret mission encoded in the tenth cranial nerve was to create agitation and contribute

to the acceleration of nervosity in the environment. IBS was programmed to infiltrate and prompt the unseen intestinal society to react and revolt against the mental dictatorship maintained through CN X.

Protests started all over Ammonida Buck Terra, followed by terror caused by SODMAPs religious fanatics. Attracting the esteemed philosopher JJ Rousseau-Fabian on his side, IBS succeeded to sow conflict and rivalry everywhere. Rousseau was the author of the famous quote “*Ingurgito ergo sum*”, succeeding in conditioning the public behaviour. Fortunately, based on a vegetarian delayed-release, Ammon’s gut functioned properly.

IBS was supposed to instrument the attacks of the SODMAPs terror organization and proactively create imbalances in the system, aiming the disconnection of the CN X. This cataclysmic action would affect the brain and finally bring whole Ammonida to destruction. The total solution was to encourage consumption of a triple release of a dangerous Buck T Ria strain, intended to cause tears in the intestinal lining and in Ammon’s eyes. As IBS acknowledged, the science behind it made sense. The target was to create an unhappy leaky gut, overstuffed and cramped.

In less than two days, ten billion CFUs or Colony Forming Units were pumped into the system. Ecstatic with serotonin, the male adolescent cells were bungee jumping back and forth through the intestinal walls, while Buck T Ria girls practiced aerobics. The new Ammonida diva was Buck Ji, the never heard of Buck T Ria, promoting Weight Loss Conspiracy.

Panicking news were spread about a new alien parasite that invaded the Ammonid system. The unknown parasite was discovered by PuStnik satellite and the scientists copiously explained how it attacked females, using their body to randomly multiply. Horrified, large groups poured on the tube folds. Alerted, the authorities initiated a law change to prevent protests due to noise and annoyance caused to the public formed by the community of microorganisms in the intestines.

Taking advantage, SODMAPs terrorists caused fatal explosions and mass assassinations. Izzy Dai, the one who detected unauthorised in-shell movements caused by an unexplained phenomenon of sanctimony, tried to reverse the chaos. He verified the in-shell substation, regulating the substation automation system. Izzy Dai was a young patriot who was secretly a member of an occult society, where the affiliates had

the mysterious ritual of shaking hands with thin air and talk to invisible entities.

Izzy Dai was a pro-CN X mental control, sympathising with the Immunists, being totally against the Leukocists. Immunists promoted politics of community protection to strengthen immunity, while the Leukocists encouraged the individualist approach and perpetual competition. To calm the society, Izzy Dai was invited to a dialogue with the opposing force, the leader of the Leukocists, Skinhead Bipalium.

– Individuals are weak. Strike a ring and the whole chain breaks, said Izzy.

– Not if the ring fights to resist, Bipalium replied.

– The individual ring cannot resist the hammering. If one microorganism is affected, the whole organism will fall. The weakness is to be found in the small and numerous, and absolutely each of them need to be protected.

– No, the billions of small organisms have to face hardships, diseases and conflicts to grow strong. Only the strongest will survive.

– So you intentionally condemn all the others to death, leaving them without protection on purpose?

– That's the idea.

– One tiny vascular connection to the CN X broken and Ammonida, our planet, dies, falling into the

infinite void. Is this what you want with your criminal approach?

– This will never happen, Ammonida is immortal. Besides, we want to interrupt the connection to the CN X completely, to finish with the dictatorship, once and for all. We are the United Leukocist Organisation encouraging ActivEmotion, the continuous fight for survival and the inner competition through which all the weak ones will be eliminated and only the strong will remain.

– You are delirious due to sugar overdose.

– We either die fighting or we live parasite-free! shouted Skinhead Bipalium emphatically, raising his right fist.

– We will do no recklessness of this type, Izzy Dai gestured peacefully, leaving the premises.

The media outlets supporting Leukocists rushed to comment the raising of Skinhead Bipalium's right fist:

The gesture of the right hand had been much discussed and variously interpreted, either as the end of the action of throwing a kiss as an act of worship, or as resulting from cracking the fingers with the thumb, as a ritual act.

The Immunists criticised the dangers of extremism, highlighting what they thought to be the meaning of the Leukocist movement:

It seems fairly clear that the gesture is described in the legendary phrase "Uban Damiqti Tarashu", "to stretch out a favourable finger", a blessing which corresponds to the reverse action, in which the index finger is not stretched out.

In three days, a SODMAPs bomb fell on the Leukocists headquarters and Skinhead Bipalium disintegrated instantly, together with his radicalists. Scared by the violent civil war, IBS launched himself down the tubular system and emerged victoriously into the light.

UKKULALAX ALIENS

Labar TUR-ma Ria was again a little girl. Recently, she found herself in a new strange world, where the inhabitants had the custom of sleeping as much as possible. Day and night, all they did was eat and sleep. "Faster! Further! Just eat! Just sleep!" were the suggestions permanently voiced out by a series of big white plastic portable speakers rolling on two bicycle rubber wheels, chosen for their appearance rather than for their utility. Sometimes, these people were drinking, too. Connected by a transfusion tube directly to a square pink pipe installed in their living rooms, the inhabitants extracted as much liquid as they needed to keep the alcohol intake stable in their blood.

What surprised Ria was that the people here had three legs instead of two, like all common sense biped humans. She called them Tripitch people since that day. The world where Tripitch people lived was named Ukusikhohlisa and was governed by a queen and a king. Apparently, they still lived in the late antiquity, never having the chance to advance jumping on the next link to reach Middle Ages. Tripitch people were talking

through their noses because they had no mouth at all. So, whistling through his nasal cavity, one Tripitch named Nara conveyed to Labar that sixty years ago, the queen was inseminated in vitro with a mutated alien embryo resulted from a past love story with an inhabitant of the planet Ukkulalax.

The being obtained was sent to the Vast Cosmos to establish a royal dynasty intended to rule the galaxy. It was meant to help the Ukusikhohlisa Empire strike back on the stars. They had the weird idea that their ancestors came from a star in the galaxy and settled on Ukusikhohlisa millions of years ago. All the other people descended from the three legged monkeys whose cortical brains were improved through genetic mixture with dolphins. What resulted was a creature able to climb trees and high buildings, while being perfectly capable of living completely immersed under ocean for unlimited time.

After the millions of years of Darwinian evolution ended, plans were made by their scientists, stretching for hundreds of years into the near and far future. How could they leave something to the unknown? Everything had to be carefully thought, planned and implemented. Nothing should be left to mere chance. What they couldn't foresee, being taken

completely by surprise, was the fact that the Ukkulalax mutated alien happened to be one-legged. Instead of keeping the best balance standing up on three legs like a tripod, he looked like a one-legged table.

Disappointingly, the alien prince looked just like a common coffee table. Besides having that ridiculous look, he talked gibberish repeating "Kluu Kuu Ayi Kayi" continuously, while milking four cows plus one more and a limping horse. A cuckoo was singing Vivaldi's Symphony in C Major I Allegro Molto on a tree branch to calm the domestic animals. However, the cows were tranquilized to stay still and under absolutely no circumstance oppose the milking process. But they were allowed to wear Ω omega letter tattoos all over their large bodies. Lamentably, the historians couldn't decode the meaning of the mysterious words mumbled by the prince.

Bothered by the one-leggness phenomenon and because nobody drank coffee in Ukusikhohlisa, the alien prince was declared useless. Consequently, he was packed in a rocket and sent to the nearest inhabitable planet, to do whatever he could for the glory of the Ukusikhohlisa and his IVF mother. Tripitch Tripods were outraged by this scientific decision, even if they

were told absolutely nothing. How did they come to knowing it, then?

A crazy scientist introduced a chemical formula in the alcoholic daily intake, which carried the meaning of restricted data or Ukusikhohlisa's secret intelligence to their brains. Some of the Tripods could dream it in long sequences, unfolding it into their unconsciousness like a long winding ribbon. Unsuspected, bits of publicly concealed data flowed through their long term memory. Nobody knew about it, until the mad scientist died, following an alcoholic coma. When the queen found out, she was devastated and maddened with fury.

– Paint the street in the colour of my dress, she requested slapping herself once.

– Do not maltreat yourself, your Tripod Majesty, or I jump off the balcony right away, replied the servant.

– If you don't do what I say, I will slap myself twice.

Terrified, the servant pulled a hideously long pump which began to spray purple dots on the street. Excited, the queen died of happiness, laughing hysterically. Labar TUR-ma Ria fell asleep right in that moment and never woke up in that reality again.

SYR-MA-CHINE

Wizard Darfur took great pleasure in sliding Labar TUR-ma Ria up and down the axis of time, pushing him down in the secondhand past and up into the brand new future. Installed in a wooden minecart, Labar TUR-ma Ria used a manual crank handle for roller shutters to make his way through the vastity of time, already lived or not yet. The advantage of choosing a path in the past space and time coordinates was that the user had some information about it, whether true or not. That's what the Great Wizard Darfur wanted to find out, if the knowledge about the past recorded by the ancient historians was truly according to reality or not.

Many glorious empires and their rulers intervened modifying the fabric of the reality, to please their egos and pride. The timeline axis was hidden in the middle of Darfur's daily saloon and had the shape of a wooden zigzagged mine railway network. The rattling was deafening. Various wooden mine carts were travelling on it, loaded with agents used by the Great Wizard to spy mainly on the past, already consumed, indented and unkempt. The agents were equipped with

invisible telescopic butterfly nets to catch random reminiscences of the former people. This paramount secret activity was named Memory Fishing, mission code Where the Invisible Fish Fly or WIFF.

Without remembering how she got there, Labar TUR-ma Ria found herself in a classroom, taking down the lesson written on the blackboard. Quite late, a deaf male student came to school seriously ill. He said nothing all day long, rotating around himself, while holding the bag on his right shoulder. The unknown illness proved to be highly contagious, every second student located approximately two steps distance from the infected one began to rotate around himself in the same manner, holding the school bag exactly on the same shoulder.

If the bag was on the left shoulder, the student was immune to the disease. In a few hours, seventy percent of the school students were constantly rotating around themselves, without showing signs of tiredness or boredom. Ambulance was called and a whole army of doctors appeared hidden behind white overalls, wearing transparent helmets. They were armed with some syringe machine-guns which were throwing one hundred needles charged with therapeutic serum at a single push of the trigger. Following a national decree,

the students were all lined in front of a wall in the courtyard and serially shot in the chest with the medical syringe machine-guns, three times per day.

The therapeutic weapons were called Syr-Ma-Chine and were manufactured in the factory owned by the richest man in the world, whose main responsibility was to cut the nails of the heads of the state. Often, he was squatting in the bushes of the State Palace, peeping on all servants. During night time, he was sleeping in an invisible wedding tent activated by sensors. A robot dog charged with solar energy was guarding the tent.

The robot looked like an ordinary Chihuahua, but never peed or defecated. A young court servant newly arrived from the shores of the River Van was alerted by the fact that he never saw the dog peeing or chewing a fat marrow bone. His name was Kullen Vaan D'Amina and he was around 18 years old.

– This is not a real dog, he told himself.

– Madam, this dog is rabid, he calmly informed his next superior in the complicated hierarchy of servants.

– Argument?

– I have never seen him urinating or defecating.

– This is subjective, most individual perspective.

Something else?

- Nothing for the moment.
- Keep attentive and inform us about any peculiarities.
- I will.
- Dismissed.

From that day on, Kullen Vaan D'Amina wouldn't eat, wouldn't sleep, following the dog while wandering through all the bushes in the royal garden. The dog preferred square bushes, avoiding the circular ones. Huge automatic garden scissors appeared out of nowhere and began to trim the fence randomly. One wrong move and Kullen Vaan D'Amina lost his hair to a pair of stainless steel automatic scissors. That very evening, the boy shaved his hair completely, remaining bald.

Next day, all the servants of his category were obliged to shave their heads, thus an army of bald heads was created to serve the majesties. Whenever cold, the bald-headed regiment would wear small four-legged toy chairs on their heads, to keep aware. They had to avoid the cold, which could mess with their minds, switching all the main commands in the mental board. One day, while chasing the unusual dog, Kullen Vaan D'Amina came across the business man hiding inside a bush in the shape of a pentagonal prism.

– A pentagonal prism is a prism having two pentagonal bases and five rectangular sides. It is a heptahedron, the boy repeated out loud seven times the formula learned in school.

Then he grabbed a pair of pliers found on the ground and clamped it on his nose, measuring steps counting to ten and downwards, for an indefinite period of time. Hearing this, the business man coughed once. Kullen Vaan D'Amina prolonged his own ears by pulling them upwards. It seemed to him that a slight faint cough could be heard coming from inside the pentagonal prism bush.

- To be or not to be? said the boy.
- Not to be, a voice replied.
- So you are not there?
- No, I'm not. Can you see me?
- No, but I can hear you.
- The voice is not real, it comes from the radio.

Musasir! he shouted out loud.

– No more questions then, but one, sir – have you seen the weird dog?

– Dog, dog, dog, dog, dog, dog, the voice replied like a scratched disk.

– This is a machine. Maybe it's a test, the boy said to himself while going away.

Seven days in a row, nothing else came to his attention. The next superior called him on a Sunday morning, when all the other servants were at the church, performing the religious rite by continuously masticating chewing gum flavoured with essence of obedience, patience and servitude, under the guidance of the High Priest.

– Report about the unusual dog situation, right away.

– There is a voice living inside a pentagonal prism bush, right under the window of the chaplain, madam.

– Only a voice, no material presence?

– Not a visible one.

– Did it say something?

– It said "not to be" rather than "to be". Then it uttered "Musasir".

– Sir or Musasir?

– Musasir, as far as I'm aware.

– I understand. Leave it there. It could have been a hallucination. Go to the room number 1089 for a check up and a paid treatment through induced hypnoses.

– Thank you, madam, the boy retreated backwards, bowing as low as he could.

That evening he was hypnotized and put to a long REM sleep till the next century of glorious national deeds, already officially recorded in the Calendar of Patent Rolls and Tolls, marked with the Majestic Royal Seal.

DRAMA CLASS

Still located in the same spacetime coordinates, Labar TUR-ma Ria went to school again. It was compulsory and legally imposed. She had drama classes that morning. In the drama studio, the teacher was stamping her right foot continuously, till a fissure in the fake reality appeared. Vexed, she invited everybody to her birthday party, where she staged a one-person show by burying her own shade. The shade refused to keep its corners straight, rounding them whenever unsatisfied with itself.

– You see – she said in a Shakespearean monologue – my shade got sick. It's a mysterious illness caused by microscopic crown-shaped viruses, germinating deep under my skin. The incredibly small crowns grow spikes and pierce through my body parts. It's painful, auuuuuuuch! So painful that my teeth melt by themselves without my approval. A witch ghost called Paine appeared one night, instructing me to burn long slices of green bananas and children's pinkish toe nails, on a silver plate. "Swift, she said, hurry up! It's a modest proposal"!

Her truly emotional monologue was interrupted by a hippopotamus doctor who, unexpectedly, found himself among the party guests. He stepped on the scene to check her health, concluding that the disease was active only during her sleep, being possible to be observed only while dreaming. Consequently, each night she died, coming back to life when waking up, screaming awfully that she had been bitten by a dog-sized jelly-spider when taking a bath in a solidified river.

Unimaginably worried by the risk of spreading the illness worldwide, a team of highly qualified doctors put on cosmonaut suits. Chanting a magic formula to significantly reduce their sizes, they dived within her last dream, instantly turning it into a nightmare. The fake reality undulated once to the left, bounced back to the right and exploded upwards, spreading rotten fish eggs everywhere. A scientific error was committed unintentionally, causing the whole world to be absorbed into the hysterical woman's dream.

THE METALLIC PIPE

Next class in the Arts Lab, Labar TUR-ma Ria witnessed an unusual incident. An absolutely common metallic pipe lost its way on the geometrical point where two brick cubes were slightly pulsating. It was plain to see that this point connected four broken lines which pretended to be hiding behind their own reflection. The intersection point did not consent to their decision and started to revolve around itself, causing the lines to bleed downwards, out of their officially authorized frame.

Ashamed by their treacherous behaviour, the cubes changed their consistence into rosy unicorn flesh. Being amazed by the shocking metamorphose, an invisible giant paint brush started picturing the ground in red and yellow. It actually looked very much like ketchup and mustard falling down from the sky. A hungry black cat tasted it, licking it slowly for less than a minute. The sensors on the cat's tongue analyzed the particles in the red and yellow sauces and realized that it was fake.

The emotional pressure of the pipe was expressed in the form of the steam emanated, regulated by a clock attached to itself, measured in random hissing. Enraged by the bloody redness spreading across the whole world, the pipe invoked the night to pour some dark blue into the landscape. Night fell incognito disguised in the shape of an incredibly big mismatched hawk, whose claws were made of granite. Terribly frightened and quite terrified, the cubes turned into two huge beating hearts. That's why the night hawk landed perpendicularly on them, challenging the right angle in the opposite corner of its own eye.

This prompted a catastrophically dry tsunami caused by the eruption of Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha-pai volcano on Tonga island, impossible to be noticed by naked eye. You have to climb on a huge microscope and fly above the ocean to be able to see it. Bright red daylight stained with yellowish stripes permuted to one side of the globe and dark bluish night replicated obliquely on the other side, balancing itself against the centre of the Earth. In between them, a narrow white triangle shot bullets randomly in all directions. Then the grass simply refused to grow.

LABAR TUR-MA RIA'S CAVITY

Kamadme Pa Rudain was quite a dark place to be. To prevent depression, Labar TUR-ma Ria ate lots of chocolate and loads of candies, personally contributing to the rotting of her own teeth. No, she wasn't forced to do so, her craving for sweets was deep and wild, urging her from inside to stretch her hand, grab the sweet and devour it savagely. She could even contract her senses to hear the sweets crying out in despair, while carried to her mouth like in a cave of doom. Following this cataclysm, Ria's teeth started to decay, slowly turning black. She thought coal dust covered her denture during a bad dream caused by indigestion.

Ria did not tell anybody about it, hoping the powder would be cleaned away by the tooth brush. In a few days, she came to the conclusion that the dust won't go away. Next evening, she started to feel the pain in her mouth, irradiating to the right jaw and even to the right eye. To solve the problem, she anxiously searched for a magic chant online, reading Hairy Botter's adventures.

Babbling "tootha-toothy-toothca" for thirty minutes and half of a second, the pain did not cease. She

took the mirror and looked inside her mouth to find the painful tooth. The girl put her finger on each of them, till she felt the painful one. It was the second tooth to the right from the incisive on the lower row. When peeping in the mirror, she noticed a huge hole, blackish and profound, standing right there without being called or even invited.

– So this is the cause of the ache. I have to get rid of it, by all means, Ria promised herself.

Instead of talking to her mom about it, Labar TUR-ma Ria dived online on her phone, shuffling tens of digital pages, pushing the arrow back and front, till a fog covered her eyesight.

– Don't brush your teeth too aggressively in the morning, but rub them strongly in the evenings counting to one hundred, imagining invisible floss cleaning them.

– Don't eat sweets on Mondays, but eat as many as you can on Fridays, standing on your right leg only, with the opposite hand up.

– Saturday you can eat even more if you stand on your hands and shake your cavities down on the floor, singing a song.

She tried all these tricks, but the pain didn't go away, nor the coal dust. In the morning, she went to

school and during the third lesson, her jaw got swollen. The science teacher and her huge curved nose came near her desk to express sincere worries.

– We really think your parents are neglecting you, so we are going to report the situation to the State Wizard. Go home, do not mention anything to your parents, we will take care of everything, uttered the nosed woman.

Scared of the unnatural spark in the round iris of the teacher's eyes, Ria went home and hid herself inside the room, locking the door from inside. Her parents were still at work. When they came back, they knocked on the door, asking her:

– Are you all right?

Considering she is asleep, they left her alone to rest.

– She is so tired, said the mother to her father.

– Indeed, she is exhausted. Poor creatures, the school is sucking all the energy out of them. Maybe it's better this way.

– Who knows, yeah, who knows! Let's be wise and patient.

– You are right.

In a few hours, they heard knocks on the entrance door. When the father opened it, he saw a card box filled

with green and black bugs. When he touched the box to move it, the bugs turned into men carrying traffic cones and thermometers on their heads. Her father closed the door immediately and went upstairs. The men turned back to their bug shape again.

– Ria, what is happening? There is a bug infestation in our courtyard. Did you order something online?

– No, dad, I didn't. I was in school, no phone use allowed in there. Call Renttokill, they might help.

– I guess Renttotkill is too much, let's try ClickandSpray first. They come and take it immediately and never hear of it again.

Ria was still too afraid to tell her parents what the teacher said. Shortly, huge black birds armed with sharp needles instead of beaks were flying around the house, to chase the bugs. Still hungry, the birds started to knock on the windows with their beaks, shaking wings. Looking beyond the glass, Ria saw one of the birds had the nose and the eyes of her teacher. Terrified, Ria screamed out.

Her parents came quickly.

– Ria, open the door, for God's sake!

Ria opened the door after her parents implored her for ten minutes on their knees.

– Oh, Ria, what's wrong with your jaw?
– I have a tooth ache.
– Why didn't you tell us?
– You should have guessed it, that's what good parents do!

– Sorry, please excuse our flaws, we don't have those parent superpowers like any other parent. But we know what to do, we have to take you to the dentist.

– No dentist, no, never!
– There is no other way.
– Ok, then let's go to the dentist.

Her father looked outside and saw the courtyard was quiet and peaceful. They opened the door and carefully stepped outside, looking in all directions. Suddenly, they were out in the ruthless concrete reality. The family got into the car and the birds invaded from all sides, beating the car with their wooden wings and metallic sharp beaks. A scratch and a fissure in the window by her side and Ria shouted out loud. They drove out of the courtyard and the birds followed them, together with the bugs' colony and a few neighbours really preoccupied about Ria's health. A huge black truck with red lights came out of nowhere in high speed, about to crash into their car when to turn left on the main street.

– Look out! mother screamed.

Despite the fierce opposition of the ruthless reality, they arrived at the dentist and Ria's decayed tooth was finally extracted. Since that day, Labar TUR-ma Ria ate less candies, but couldn't give up chocolate. Not yet.

AN INSIDIOUS IDEEA

Great Wizard Darfur obliged Labar TUR-ma Ria to stay in Kamadme Pa Rudain for some time. So, on Wednesday, an unwelcome idea insinuated into the little girl's head. How did it happen? The invisible concept was hanging in the air like undetected mist. Then it got the opportunity to enter the eye by riding a photon, which could easily penetrate the dark pupil. In this stage, it was still a potential idea, a mere seed of a conceptual probability. Once inside the brain, it started flowing through the mental process, travelling on the neuronal highway network, unfolding in all directions.

Gradually, it grew larger swallowing random bits of data, requiring more neuronal energy. In no time, it became the largest and the most pregnant idea in her mind, feeding with advertising mental commands, till it colonized Labar TUR-ma Ria's mind. Multiplying and cloning itself in billion copies, it occupied the girl's entire mental capacity, becoming the most prevalent idea among all the others.

On a Sunday noon, Ria felt something is not right. Being so incredibly large, the idea started to rub itself

against the cranial carcass, pressing on her parietal and temporal bones. The idea throbbed inside her skull, kicking strongly. That made Ria start shaking, then caused her to lose balance while standing up. Afterwards, something completely crazy happened.

The idea lifted her slightly above the floor, pushing her against the house walls. Her parents thought she was maybe possessed by the devil. Next day, Ria accused occasional headaches. In three days, long sessions of migraines installed in her life, accompanied by indigestion and insomnia. She felt the urge to eat too much, craving for each type of food she saw or smelled around.

Consequently, her parents locked the fridge during the night. Every morning, she felt sickness and nausea, causing her to regularly puke. In less than a week, she got severely depressed. In a fortnight, she got hysterical, crying endlessly for no reason. To fight this misery, Ria began to contradict the prevalent idea in front of the TV set, screaming out loud while alone. Once she threw a cup of tea in the face of the woman who was talking annoyingly about the rights of the unknown, the nonexistent and the unmanifest reality.

She said that we must be aware of the fact that women have a permanent open contract with the

unpredicted and unknown reality, manifested through the apparition of the mysterious. This indefinite entity can arrive anytime installing into yourself as in a cocoon, and grow there till mature to come into being. Rest assured, these are not ghosts, this is not a ghost hunt! Definitely not! It's just the unfolding of the mysterious forces emanated by the unperceived universe.

Thus, women have to be always prepared to lovingly accept and receive the mysterious any moment, ready or not, poor or rich, married or single. That's the female's true destiny. If not, the woman is a sinner, an inhuman useless creature and an assassin. Then, the speaker serenely began to confess about the giant insect alien she was talking to each night, the true source of her revelations. She was crying and laughing at the same time, and the programme was quickly interrupted by random commercials.

– What?! I don't like it. What is that, the right of the mysterious? Is it real or not? Has it got any fleshy consistence or it's just a void idea, filled with conceptual immateriality?

Ria was convinced, as much as she could think logically, that it has to be real, material, to be considered a form of existence. An idea cannot, by all means, be considered an existence.

– So, it seems the ideas have rights, more rights than the human beings, she told herself.

Following the splash, the screen of the 3D TV lost colour in the upper right corner, which spread all over it in a few days. She replaced the TV with a better one. But she kept having outbursts in front of the new TV set.

– No, it's not true. You are all liars and deceivers.

– No, we are not, replied the ideas.

– You harass me in broad daylight and plant virused ideas in my head, to turn my life around the way you want. But I don't want what you want. Definitely not!

– Listen, it's in your best interest to do what we want. We know better.

– You, cunning grotesque brute ideas! You know what? I will turn off the TV and never watch it again. It's plain to see that some evil forces abide there, hiding behind the screen.

– No, please do not turn off the TV! That means death for us, useless insidious ideas!

Ruthlessly, Ria pushed the button. Silence filled the room, it was so much tranquillity that she could hear her brain thinking. The girl kept the TV shut down for next day, too. The monstrously insidious idea had no more opportunity to feed, so it slowly reversed to its original size, getting smaller and smaller, till it got

crowded by other stronger ideas nesting in her thought process chain.

Labar TUR-ma Ria grabbed a book and started reading. It was a real material book made of paper pages and hard cardboard covers. Her mind resettled in its own place and the mental waves calmed down, as if after a violent storm. It started to flow peacefully like a crystal clear brooklet on a green meadow, in a summer day. The insidious idea died of spite and starvation, being consumed by a stronger idea in the vast neuronal architecture. Then it was neutralized and eliminated for good during an agitated dream. That night, Ria dreamed that she turned into a huge balloon, floating up to the ceiling, against her own will.

– No, I don't want to be a balloon, I want to be a slim little girl, playing happily outside!

Her protest couldn't stop the evil forces lifting her above the roof, then into the cold dark sky, being unwillingly carried away towards unknown places.

– Aaaaa! she screamed terribly frightened.

When she woke up, her little heart was beating wildly. She took a sip of water and went back to sleep, cherishing for the summer holiday with her grandparents in the native village, where insidious ideas have no power, being lost in the vast almighty nature.

NOW WE ARE GOING PLACES!

Great Wizard Darfur amused himself seeing Labar TUR-ma closed inside a little girl's body. Thus, still in Kamadme Pa Rudain, one cloudy day, a surreptitious thought came to existence in Ria's mind. It suddenly appeared there, just like an egg laid by a bored hen one Thursday morning. How did this unfortunate phenomena happen? Ria received an invitation to go to Ama-du-bad on her summer vacation. It wasn't really an invitation, more like an advert on the social media platform she was virtually hanging on, Instukuqabuka. Should she go or should she not?

– Of course you should go, replied the next advert. Cocopan! Why waste your life doing nothing?

Then a photo of a train crash was posted by a news agency.

– What if an accident happens on the way there, right before getting out of the border? crossed her mind.

– No, be positive! the next advert implied, just pay now and be certain nothing bad will happen. We are here to make sure you are safe and well taken care of.

Convinced, Ria searched for the bank card to pay. The card curved itself, growing little wings, ready to fly to the ceiling. Quickly, she grabbed the card, which lifted her in the air, while the ceiling moved down, reversing its position with the floor. Ama-du-bad appeared on her table, smiling at her from in front of the window. It was wooden, rectangular, white and had black corners. A crane was flying in the opposite direction. Five pumpkins sat there, quietly, near a basket of apples, with nothing to say for or against the situation.

THE ALMOST INVISIBLE TOY PLANE

Next afternoon, Labar TUR-ma Ria found a small toy plane on the ground. She took it home, afraid the plane might catch a cold and die alone in the darkness. It was a four centimetres long, white plastic plane, its wings striped in green. When she fell asleep, the toy plane decreased to microscopic size. Next day, it entered Ria's body when she put her hands up, while practicing ballet in her room. It entered the right hand, piercing it, slightly pinching her like a mosquito bite.

It travelled inside her body, following a secret map, kept in a laptop hidden under a bench in the local hospital changing-room. Above it stood a green table cloth, striped with red, covering it. Ria felt it roaming down towards one leg, flowing through the blood stream, tickling her veins. Once, she felt a scratch when the table cloth was accidentally moved, causing one corner of the laptop to be exposed.

The plane laughed maniacally for half a minute, growing iron teeth. The cloth was moved back by a stranded mouse, so the plane was shut down. Whenever she moved her hands, Ria heard a soft beep and

sometimes even a soft melody. Her respiration accelerated and when the beep stopped, she felt short of breath. Less air to inhale from now on. She had to get used to this idea, at least she had enough water for the moment. Ria had to count sixty seconds, inhale deeply, keep the air for three seconds and slowly exhale it. A few weeks passed, while she moved her hands three times per day and the water was already scarce in the house.

In a few months, there was not enough food in the fridge, only a few slices of bread, five eggs and a salami roll. After a year, the house visibly reduced its size, the walls getting thinner, almost transparent. In a few days, people carrying huge calculators in their hands appeared in the front courtyard. They kept typing on the white calculators, uttering series of digits. Their superior, a bald, fat man, with a swollen belly like a boxing sack and three hanging chins, said out loud:

– Your debts increased ten times since last year, raising to the level of the roof, threatening to smash it down.

Then the manager insinuated himself within the house through the keyhole, the others trespassing under the entrance door. Then, grinning and barking, they started to push Ria and her parents through the walls, out of their house.

- What is happening?
- Keep your hands in your pockets. Why do you wave them so often?
- I like to dance.
- Dance less with your hands and move your legs more.

Before she knew it, Ria learned to dance Kazachok, keeping her hands closed behind her back, squatting down to the ground, raising her legs one by one, perfectly stretched towards the wardrobe. She put a lot of effort into it, but after practicing daily, she could do it five minutes a day without stopping. Her hands got upset and didn't want to show themselves from behind her back anymore.

TREE SURGERY

Still in the same place and situation, feeling tired, Labar TUR-ma Ria put herself in bed at four o'clock. She strived to sleep, strongly opposing random thoughts clouding her inner mental sky. Thoughts invaded her mind the way thick, dark, clouds barge in, on a rainy autumn day. Even when she was awake, feelings, assumptions and hunches used to assault her like pray birds gone rabid. As she was lying down in her bed eyes closed, uncontrolled ideas and images roamed in her mental environment, coming from every side, all at the same time.

Memories from the past, thoughts about the present, future plans, decisions, doubts, worries, questions, answers, monologues or solutions to unsolved or unsolvable issues were rotating in high speed within her head. How could she sleep with this invasion of unwanted thoughts? She turned around on the other side, worrying about her school work, a project she hasn't finished yet, out of boredom and tiredness combined together. What should she eat tonight? Something without carbohydrates, no sugar in the

evening. What then? Boiled potatoes and salad sounds good.

What's happening outside? Neighbours were chatting noisily, causing her to cover the ears. Impossible to sleep. Rubbing her eyes, the girl checked the clock and opened the window blinds. Ria couldn't believe her eyes, the trees in the courtyard had red leaves and their branches and trunks were whitish, covered with a sort of a white powder.

– Mom, what's happening? The trees are changed.

– Yeah, I see. Most unusual.

– Do you think they might be sick?

– You are right, they are sick.

– Is there any tree-doctor around?

– I heard of tree surgery specialists. We should call them.

– I will call them right away.

Ria grabbed her mobile phone and typed a number found online.

– Tree surgery. Good afternoon.

– Good afternoon. My name is Ria and I have just found out that the trees in my courtyard are sick.

– What is the colour of the leaves?

– Bright red.

- What about the trunks and branches?
- A white dust has covered them.
- That's *Oudemansiella mucida*, a *fussimus* tree fungus. We will send an intervention team right now.

Address, please?

- Botchery Avenue 88, HH44MI8.
- House number?
- 40, on the right.
- Thank you, the team will arrive in a few moments.

The tree surgeons missed the address. Therefore, the trees smacked their lips, requesting to be disciplinary dismissed.

THE OLD MARE AND THE BALD BADGER

Still in Kamadme Pa Rudain, Labar TUR-ma Ria grew up a bit and moved to a new house, paying eight hundred pangs per month for larger space and a front side courtyard. Astonishingly, for a spare room, a private parking and a normally sized kitchen, she had to pay four hundred pangs more, monthly. The house was one century old, cold in the winter, while the walls always carry that odd smell, typical for Kamadme Pa Rudain.

According to their law, each citizen was obliged to save air, breathing once a minute, holding breath till the ears make a popping sound. To improve the life quality of the population, Kamadme Pa Rudain's government decreed the walls should be as thin as possible, to make the air circulate better, feel fresher and cooler.

– But you cannot warm it in the winter, noticed Labar TUR-ma Ria.

– Nevertheless, that is not important. Not at all, please do not insist, and do not attempt to oppose us, it's

useless and dangerous, the local council replied in leaflet enclosed into a standard package.

"Present from the government. We have your interest at heart!", was written in golden ink all over the box, vigorously thrown in the courtyard by a muscular panther.

– We really care about you, roared the biped panther, quickly jumping over the fence.

The owner of the house was an old, tall, skinny Mare, composed of 40% bones and 60% pure hatred. The concentration of hate grew proportionally with the chronological consummation process, mainly in an oblique direction. Obsessed with her house, she was crying, kicking and screaming while tying herself to the gate, begging for a Sol key to get inside the house whenever she wanted, especially when Ria wasn't at home. The Mare wanted to get in when absolutely nobody was at home, not even Ria's invisible younger self, whose mental development was hindered by acute sadness.

What Labar TUR-ma Ria didn't know when renting the house was the fact that the old Mare was in an intimate relationship with the Badger - the owner of the real estate agency. They lived in the same property and had a cub together. The cub was spoiled, clearly

having some personality issues caused by profound confusion, not being sure to what fauna it belonged. For that matter, Kittim the cubby acted as the doctor said it should, standing in front of the entrance door, shouting nine series of shriek screams per minute.

Not at all bothered by this, the Badger was short, skinny, bald, insignificant, throwing furtive quick looks from behind the eyeglasses. One day, Ria caught him quickly stealing flower pots from the courtyard. Upset with her noticing it, he instructed some neighbours to set the house on fire, outraging his doubttable female partner. This was his real intention he kept denying in front of the firemen truck.

As a direct result and in mockery, the fence did not oppose enough resistance to the flames, cowardly burning to irritate Ria. A whole year passed already, but the Mare did not attempt to repair it, only to be able to peep through the fence whenever she fancied. This is a national sport in their dimension, tailored especially to satisfy the sadistic instincts inherited from their imperial ancestors. Their unspoken, not quite realistic objective was to use this house as if Ria wasn't really living there, while obliging her to pay lots of money per month.

At the government office, they claimed Ria didn't exist for the simple fact that she was invisible, mainly

because they do not see her, no matter how hard they keep trying. Thus, there was absolutely no logical possibility for Ria to prove her own existence. The clerk stamped their claim form, grinning in satisfaction, stepping on Ria's left foot on purpose, pretending he can't see her either. From that moment, she was officially included in the inferior category of invisible invaders from the future.

In Kamadme Pa Rudain, it was Acu-punch-ure time. That's an annual, traditional, religious festival consisting in pinching the invisible race of invaders from the future with acupuncture needles contaminated with fear. The celebrations are stipulated in their unwritten Constitution, recorded in a tree hollow, where it's hidden ever since their first ancestor stepped on that territory. Finding himself alone on a deserted trapezoidal piece of land, he had no other way to spend his days than to talk to himself, while standing up in front of a very old tree endowed with the capacity to listen and never talk back.

IN THE COURTYARD

Another boring day in Kamadme Pa Rudain and Labar TUR-ma Ria really needed to breathe fresh air. She got out of the old centenary house, cold and unwelcoming, populated with icy unfriendly entities, invisible and maleficent, scratching her spine with long, inverted claws.

I felt them crawling inside of me, breathing the air inhaled, squeezing my inner organs with ghostly hands, her little pink secret diary closed with a metallic locker wrote by itself, recording her every thought.

Out in the open air, she found herself in a deserted courtyard garden. It started to rain, after the late, cold winter confiscated the early spring, burying it in snow. You could not get warmth from anywhere, hopeless cold and snow everywhere, making the traffic impossible.

Here I am in the courtyard, looking at a fragment of a broken Greek column, thrown aside. Cruel pagan gods had brought down the temple they were trapped in, escaping to judge and punish humans, wrote the diary.

There was an used car tyre, plastic flower pots, rat poison, an old railway station clock stuck in the XIX-th century enclosed into a conifer fence, highly grown, narrowing ahead to obstruct vision, isolate her and block the sunshine. Thick shadows squeezed in an acute angle hanged above. *Embrace the shadow!*, someone whispered. Two rotten sheds populated by fantastic ghosts and really big fat rats were located at each end of the courtyard. One shed was brown, leaning aside on the house and the other one was whitish, washed away by numerous, endless rains. It stood cornered in the sharp angle enclosed by the conifer fence, permanently locked, no key available.

I am forbidden to use this one, it belongs to the landlady.

Ria began to read some letters mailed by her friend Sara, who came to visit the courtyard together with Delia and Charlene.

Sara dug a hole in my garden, using a rusty hair pin, she said it belonged to her great-grandmother.

Later on, she used a piece of a broken typing-machine to enlarge it. Not *Enigma*, of course, it was obvious that it was a cheap fake.

– I found it in the Lim Ma Pat, it should be valuable, don't you think, Charlene? It's in my hand

now, pity to leave it there, it deserves better. Number four!

A brown bear was dancing in front of her, Sara was holding it in a long, heavy, rusty chain.

– Delia, help me here, walk the bear! He's bored to death. The ground is tough and stubborn, black and inflexible, as the night. Pitch dark, sweetie, mumbled Sara.

Two skinny moulting foxes came to watch the bear dancing. Delia got unreasonably mad, coming unexpectedly from behind, uttering softly:

– Are you still here? Don't scare the animals. Leave!

Sara did not hear, she can't use her right ear, it's completely deaf, having been eaten by a beaver when she was five. It's only a stub, shaped like a chicken's anus, pinkish and fleshy, sustaining a huge round ear ring. It was Othello's style, that angry jealous Shakespearean Maur, with his hands on Desdemona's marble neck.

– Charlene, take care, darling, that porcelain vase is very expensive, part of an ancient collection. I found it in a cave in Transylvania, Scărișoara. There is an ice palace there, 4000 years old. Don't smash it!

Sara's letters were forgotten in the rain, being partly eaten by mice. Dead insects were trapped among the pages.

Dear Adellepe, PO Box 00887121207.

– It sounds unreal, Ria thought. I suppose she typed a non-existing address, I wonder how it reached me.

She went on reading the letter:

Neither the Clork nor the Bushers were in the building as A had been asked to continue speaking about the suit-case that had been closed already, between the deafened aunt and the Probe Action Team. Once A (who is this capital A? It's annoying already!) had finished, she returned to reception, where security guards informed her that there was no-one to sign her time sheet.

Probe Action then refused to sign her paper which then caused A to refuse to leave the building until her paper had been signed. The guards informed her that they would ouch or vouch for her if she needed them to, in regards to her leaving time, but they were actually unable to sign anything. A eventually left at 17.55. According to their sayings, she was very demanding and would not listen, nor cooperate. The Big Hoard informed her on the phone that she could leave without a signature if she had put her leaving time down on the form.

It was the deafened aunt whom A came to speak for, who explained to her that she was not going to get a signature.

– I understand everything now, uttered Ria.

Sara has a deafened aunt who manages things and orders people around, from whom she inherited her deaf ear.

– She is blind, not deaf! said Sara.

– Blind and deaf, added Charlene.

– She steps in old ceramic bowls sometimes, so she is definitely blind, Sara insisted. She lines the bowls each morning, then steps in them with fury. But she can hear the bird's wing above the roof, I know for sure.

Her aunt's name is Donna Akuz, I know she lives in a big creepy house, it could have been a mental health house. She gave me her phone number 001220 ROW Non Applicable 000022051837333120912310000 to call whenever, but it's useless, she can't hear me! And I think this number doesn't exist at all, it's got too many numbers. What non applicable!

The dark-haired security guard wearing spectacles was talking about Pivotal Mail, I remember it clearly, as if I had been there before, but I wasn't, my imagination is tricky. The other security guard - it must have been a very old man, grumpy and rude - shouted at A. It's that pervert who touches women on the street

and pulls down their tops. Ria blinked in amazement. Non applicable? Hmmmm!

The next letter was shorter:

Cliont said that it was actually the LLAS syndrome, the Limited Linguistic Ability of the Speaker that was questionable. There was the deafened aunt that convinced A to leave the building (it must be a very comfortable place if A liked it so much, indubitably) and the two guards, but you have not mentioned them. Were they involved at all?

Were there more deafened aunts? I thought it was only one. Nevertheless, my thoughts do not matter, I'm only a passive reader consuming interesting stories, that's all, Ria realized. They could publish them serially in a Dickensian newspaper for Victorian readers, waiting patiently to see what will happen next to their favourite characters.

An older letter yellowed by time and dust said:

Cliont informed that We had the above A today and wanted to let you know that she was quite unprofessional. We waited for her once the suit-case was opened and called on, and after a while, the Busher went into the toilet where A was painting snails. Then she came into the courtyard, seemed very unprofessional, we could all smell the snail varnish and her phone went off in the courtyard and I had to remind her to

*repeat what was being said! Can we not have her again, please!
Thanks.*

Why was she painting snails in the toilet? Does she think she is Alice caught by the big-headed queen, searching for her stolen tarts? But why in the toilet, for God's sake? Next letter was a phone conversation transcript.

– Nonetheless, I'm confused, Ria blinked twice.

A's answer appeared on a dusty undetectable piece of paper:

Dear Sara, Please stop these letters, you are harassing me. I don't care about your boring deafened aunt Donna Akuz, I think she is retarded. So get out of the toilet and look around, people are speaking unknown languages everywhere. She is hiding there, sometimes she loses her mind, screaming out "Babylon! Babylon!", while running on the corridors, till she finally reaches the loo where she feels safe when pulling snails out of their shells because they can't talk, scream or defend themselves.

THE GIRL IN THE CHINA CUP

Fed up with learning in school and hanging in the courtyard, Labar TUR-ma Ria navigated two degrees West on the spacetime axis and arrived somewhere else. It was a bidimensional reality where he was a little girl once again. This time, she was so small, that she could live inside a China cup. Usually, she liked to stick to the sides of the mug, as a diaphanous colourful image. The girl stuck to the cup walls the way a stamp stays close to an envelope. Labar Ria liked the feeling of being an image on an object. She could see what is happening in the room without being noticed.

Certainly, nobody suspected there was an invisible man hiding in plain sight within a little girl's body, so he could spy on the realities of the past totally unhindered. In the night, when the darkness fell and nobody saw her, she would dance for hours singing to herself. One early morning, a man took the cup to drink water. The little girl was still sleeping. Suddenly, the water began to pour, causing a flood. All wet and upset, she climbed out of the cup to dry herself, mumbling in discontent.

Prompted by her chagrin, a storm unleashed in the cup, boiling the water and spilling it outside. The water droplets had molecules shaped in equations with two unknowns.

– Equations with two unknowns cannot have unique solutions, remembered Labar TUR-ma Ria.

– *Though she be but little, she is fierce!*, the molecules were wailing while dropping down.

X has left unresolved.

CHANG'E

Labar TUR-ma Ria landed in a new realm, where all the grass was red. This world was named Chang'e, a place where the flowers were white and had triangular shapes, sometimes cubical. Amazed by this unique type of nature, Labar was walking on a path in a linden tree forest. Surprisingly, the flowers and the trees had the same colour, as white as milk. Immersed in the strong perfume, Labar fell asleep on the ground. It was in the middle of the day, but it was dark outside, because a mischievous werewolf had swallowed up all ten small suns this planet had. The moon had power over the whole place now, inundating it in whitish, misty light.

Me, the Princess-of-the-3-Houses-to-Cook passed by, on her daily walk from the palace and back. When she saw Labar TUR-ma Ria, she couldn't believe her eyes. He was sleeping deeply, peacefully and his face was young and sweet. In a few moments, the princess fell in love with the mysterious sleeper. Therefore, she performed the usual ritual required in such cases, dancing around him, while burning incense and sandal wood. The smoke was delicately surrounding his head in perfumed essence

and untold affection. Finally, she uttered a magic formula and captured him within the sacred octagonal mirror. She put the mirror in her hair bun, then headed back home.

When she got into her room, she released the prince and looked at the way he was sleeping sound all night. When one tiny pale sun was released to appear on the sky, the prince woke up and found the girl sleeping as a log. The following days, they took turns sleeping, and never saw each other awake, at the same time. Nevertheless, they dreamed they were in love. Watching their dreamy love story, the malicious wizard took the prince back to his native world, his mother was ill. Labar TUR-ma Ria's love for Me, the Princess-of-the-3-Houses-to-Cook never faded away, at least not till the next mysterious adventure.

THE FLUFFY WHITE DOG

Labar TUR-ma Ria haven't quite realized he was a fluffy white dog, playing in a village courtyard. He was as small and cute as a toy. The doggy spent days roaming freely, sniffing around the house. He would often visit neighbouring courtyards to check hens and chase cats, for fun. One day, he came upon a dead frog in a muddy ditch. Taken aback by the discovery, he touched the frog with one of his paws.

– Touchdown! Pow-Wow 1610! he barked.

The creature remained silent and motionless.

– Touchdown! Abu Sim-bel!

No reaction.

– Touchdown! Chattels! Personality!

No answer.

– Touchdown! Acacius Amida, g-old and silver!

No sign. He pushed it then with his muzzle spelling:

– Touchdown! Maz-el Tov!

Not a move, again. The cute dog couldn't naturally understand the state of being dead. Logically, he thought, the lack of movement does not necessarily

mean that one is dead. Suddenly, the dog flew touched the lips of the frog and something quite strange happened. The dog started to grow bigger and bigger, then it levitated up high, till it reached the sky.

In that moment, he went through the clouds and there it remained. Nobody knew what pagan goddess turned him into a cloud to float above the Earth and it's nobody's concern, as the dog seemed happy in his new metamorphosis. High above, he was barking down to hens and cats, but luckily they could not hear him anymore, pretending they were deaf.

SKINNY CHICKEN

Due to an unpredictable event, Labar TUR-ma Ria found himself in the Tuku dimension where he was an adorable skeletal chicken. That day, the Skinny Chicken woke up earlier than usually. Dizzy, he stumbled upon the small writing table, spilling the blue ink tank on the floor. He looked at the bluish pool, trying to make a sense of it. What could it mean? Could it be a good sign or an omen? Skinny Chicken was superstitious. If a black cat happened to cross his way, he would step backwards cautiously, expecting some form of bad luck happening that day. There were other things he feared, but today he was concerned about the ink spillage.

– Never heard about blue ink spillage omen, he said to himself, trying to calm down his fears.

Concerned, he entered the bathroom to wash his face. The water was icy cold.

– Maybe the boiler is broken, said to himself. I will see about it later, decided Skinny Chicken.

Now he needed a coffee quite badly, to awake himself. Whenever not sleeping enough, Skinny Chicken

was not able to cope with his daily duties. He could not focus to move around his own house, much less to drive to work and avoid all the invisible traps on the way and at the office. You see, he was surrounded by vicious animals, especially the snakes in the Human Resources Department, who were patrolling on the corridors armed with gasoline recipients to set anybody on fire without warning.

That morning, he was heading to work when he suddenly felt a bump. He looked and saw a rat down on the street in a pool of blood. Then the ambulance and the Police car arrived, taking him away. He was lucky that there were no cameras on that segment of the street, so they had to let him go. Still, there were two witnesses to be questioned and enough evidence to gather.

It was a hard night and sleep was not good enough. Noises could be heard everywhere around the hen roost, echoing into the darkness. Everybody in the house tried to catch some rest, slightly sighing while dreaming. Who could know what one dreams, this is never to be found out, and the same goes for the thoughts someone has.

"Can you immerse deep into somebody's mind and envisage his or her thoughts? the chicken asked

himself. Unfortunately, you can't, and this is where the darkest secrets are hidden and nobody can reach them".

The same idea was nesting in the prosecutor's head, the Grey Horned Rhino, while shaving in front of the mirror that morning. He was holding the sharp razor with the right hand, quickly sliding it downwards, while meditating on it. How could he reach the truth deeply buried into the minds of the defendants appearing in front of him? It was like a game of chess played on an invisible board. The only clue we can have about somebody's thoughts are the words spoken and the gestures of the body language.

Court room number four was almost empty. The public audience seats were not occupied, yet it was a busy day. Aside, the deck was enclosed in a glass window, mounted on a wooden base. In front, a huge desk where the magistrates were presiding, a He-Goat, an Ox and a Dog. Right in front of them, on a separate stand, was the Legal Advisor, a Fennec Fox Vulpes Zerda. Right afterwards, there were the seats where the defence solicitor, the crown prosecution representatives, sometimes the defendant were sitting. The seats had blue, soft tapestry.

Upon arrival, the chicken was scanned at the entrance, then directed towards the reception. He

couldn't go elsewhere, anyway, because the route was clearly marked with colourful signs and writings. At the reception, he was asked if he needed a duty solicitor. Worried not to offend, the chicken couldn't make up his mind. The goat at the reception assured him the duty solicitor together with the interpreter are for free and he needn't pay for it, nor worry about. Encouraged, the chicken agreed to have a defence solicitor and an interpreter.

– Sit down there and wait till the solicitor comes to get you, the receptionist told the Skinny Chicken.

He sat down without moving for two or three hours. He was afraid to go to the toilet, thinking that the solicitor might suddenly come and not find him there. After two hours and a half, a fat hedgehog came to him. He followed the hedgehog solicitor in a small room, for a private discussion with the client. The interpreter, a Marbled Duck Marmaronetta Angustirostris came with them. She had a lot of hairspray in her blonde hair standing on its ends.

– Hhhmmmm! coughed the solicitor. As I have seen in the disclosure, the evidence against you is strong. They have two witnesses waiting to give statements under oath and two victims in the hospital. Now, if you plead guilty, your punishment will be

reduced with twenty-five percent of the time served. If you consider yourself not guilty, you can maintain it in front of the magistrates, but given the evidence against you, there is little chance to be acquitted or discharged.

– But he threw himself in front of my car, Your Honour!

– I am not a judge, you can call me Mr. Solicitor. Now allow the interpreter to translate what I said.

– Sorry, Mr. Solicitor, the victim threw himself in front of my car on purpose.

– You have proof?

– What proof?

– Dash board camera recordings, pictures, videos or something.

– Unfortunately, I forgot the dash camera at home that morning.

– Then you can kiss it good-bye. No proof, no defense argument. Do you understand?

– Yes, sir, Mr. Solicitor.

– Follow me to the hearing.

The hedgehog was stepping slowly, afraid not to fall down and the Skinny Chicken was following him shivering frightened, with the interpreter indifferently accompanying him. What if they send him to jail? He

could die there among tough villains, packs of wolves, sly foxes and hyenas.

Inside room number four, the magistrates were presiding at their desk: a Hereford Ox Bovinae Bos Taurus, an Airedale Terrier Dog and a Boer Goat Capra Hircus. Two witnesses were waiting behind a screen to bear witness under oath, a Mustela Putorius Polecat and a Large White Pig Sus Scrofa Domesticus. On the front wall, a painting with a crowned lion grinning in the utmost self-satisfaction. Up on the ceiling, a huge iron abstract art decoration in the shape of an enormous black spider was hanging.

– All rise!
– The State, the Crown and Regina against the defendant Skinny Chicken!

– How do you plead?
– Guilty!
– Sit down. Prosecution standing.

The Grey Horned Rhino stood up, coughing once to straighten his voice.

– Your Worships, the defendant was driving the car on the Wild Creek Road, when he suddenly stopped. Behind him, the victim named the White Cat was keeping her way on her side of the road, inside her pink vehicle. When the Chicken made his sudden stop, the

Cat was talking on hands-free with her kitten back home. Worried about the kitten, she could not stop in time, thus bumping into the Chicken's vehicle. Following the collision, the White Cat hit her head against the board, losing consciousness. The defendant stepped outside the car to offer assistance to the Cat, but nothing could be done. Thus, he called the ambulance as the Cat was not responsive. The ambulance came and took the Cat to the A&E Accidents and Emergency hospital.

– Thank you, defence speaking.

– Your worships, the defendant was driving in accordance with his licence and the traffic law on the Wild Creek Road. As instructed by my client and corroborated with the disclosure, it happened that, at a certain moment, the Fat Rat jumped in front of his vehicle out of a ditch aside. Even though the defendant was driving slowly and cautiously, he could not avoid the Rat, which consequently remained unconscious on the street. Investigating, the Police Constable 1157 Brown Jackal found out that the Rat was chased by a Gang Stray Cat. The Stray Cat was detained at the same time with the Chicken, while the Fat Rat and the White Cat were taken to the hospital where, after multiple attempts to save her, the victim was diagnosed brain

dead. Soon after her decease, the Fat Rat's heart ceded and died while on surgery.

– What's the current status of the victims? asked one magistrate.

– Your worships, the recklessness of the defendant left behind tragedy and suffering – one orphaned kitten taken by the state under its gentle, protective wing and multiple rat puppies starving in the ditch. When the defendant rushed on the afore mentioned road, little did the victims knew what fate awaits them! Totally uncalled for, this tragedy is hard to take for ... hmm ..., for inner feelings of delicate constitution, the Grey Horned Rhino ended his plead, peeking at the magistrates bench to check the effect his speech had on them.

It was more than he could hope for, his acting talents were better and better, each day. The prosecutor's voice had a slight tremor, intentionally put, shaken away by a strong cough, as if trying to get rid of unwanted emotions. The Grey Horned Rhino was secretly studying acting classes with a friend from the Tuku Royal Theatre. The trick worked, as it seemed the magistrates looked at each other, with visible frowned eyes and indignation.

The Grey Horned Rhino was cherishing high ambitions to become a politician, then a lord honoured

by the king and nothing could stand in his way. Ferociously persistent and ruthlessly motivated, the prosecutor had his own personal agenda, subjected only to his own desire for wealth and glory, and the family's profit that could come out of it. Greed is good and the end justifies the ways.

- Reasonable doubt?
- None.
- General consent?
- Present.
- Legal Advice speaking.

– Your worships, according to the Section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, the defendant is guilty of driving without due care and attention. According to the Section 1 and 2 of the Traffic Act 1960, the defendant is guilty of vehicular manslaughter. Regardless the Fat Rat's reckless behaviour, he is still guilty of colliding with the White Cat. Taking into account that the White Cat was actually pronounced brain dead by the emergency workers already inside the intervention ambulance, we recommend CD10, CD30, CD80, DD60 and DD80. That is driving without due care and attention, causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving, manslaughter or culpable homicide while driving a vehicle on public roads and causing death by dangerous driving.

The Skinny Chicken could not focus to hear anything. He was standing there, the interpreter whispering into his left ear, but he could make nothing of the sounds emptied of meanings. He felt like in a movie, where he was pinned down to the ground while the others moved and talked around him. What was happening? He was rubbing his wrists, the Police officer was kind enough to uncuff him, while standing in the deck. He kept recalling the incident occurred in a fraction of a second.

He felt a bump in the front side and one in the back. Surprised, he stopped the car, there was the Rat lying down on the ground, motionless. From behind, a pink Seat collided, the female driver collapsed. Two passers-by were looking at him. They came closer. He could not understand how the Rat jumped in front of his vehicle. Why did he do it, didn't he see it coming? Like in a dream, he heard the ambulance and the Police car arriving. He was handcuffed, the metal was cold and stiff on his thin wrists, while fragments of words reached his ears:

– You don't have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when you're questioned something you may later rely on in court. Anything you say may be used as evidence!

All these words echoed in his mind, mixed with what those unknown people were uttering right there, in this room, behind the glass deck.

The Legal Advice Fox continued:

– Being an either way offence and taking into account that the defendant's case is a very serious offence which cannot be dealt with in the Magistrates Court, we therefore recommend it should be committed to the Crown Court, said the Fox, slightly waving her bushy tail.

– All rise! The jury withdraws to deliberate.

The magistrates came back and read the verdict.

– This matter is a serious either way offence. The magistrates decline their authority on this matter and commit it to the Crown Court. The defendant is to be remained in custody.

– All rise!

Taken to the cells, the Skinny Chicken fell on his bed and fainted right away. He stayed in bed without knowing if it's day or night, till he was taken to the Crown Court. He couldn't eat anything, but drink sweetened Earl Grey Tea from Ceylon. In a few days, he got so skinny that he looked like a ghost. When he was taken to the Crown Court, he was seated down in the deck with a Police man to his right and an interpreter to the left. Both of them were encouraged to use a pair of

headphones to listen to the judge. Skinny Chicken looked into the hearing room and saw that the audience chairs were red like in the Opera House, where he went once to listen to Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*.

– All rise!

The judge – a Hackney Horse –, two wolves from the Crown Prosecution Service and the defence hedgehog entered the room. When the Chicken saw the judge and the rest of the bench wearing white wigs and long black robes, he got intimidated. Right in front of them, a group of twelve badgers were looking at him, ready to decide if he's guilty or not. Skinny Chicken felt a strong pressure in his head, then a crack inside the cranium. A warm liquid began pouring inside his brain, then he got relaxed and happy.

Suddenly, he jumped up and started to sing out loud, dancing and laughing maniacally.

– Stupid cow, stupid cow, he kept screaming.

The Police officer restrained him, while the judge, really surprised, declared the court hearing adjourned and requested a mental health check on the defendant. In a week, the Skinny Chicken was taken to the Psychiatric Hospital, being diagnosed with major depressive disorder, which soon evolved into a schizophrenia.

THE WOMAN WHO DIED OF CURIOSITY

It was still Middle Ages in Sakkukutu for the whole day in question, and Labar TUR-ma Ria happened to materialize there as an illiterate woman named Hulla. That morning, she was walking on a foot path towards the nearby forest, to gather some twigs and brushwood. It was needed to cook the porridge in the evening, she had three numerous families of villeins to feed. As everybody knows, villeins in gross or villeins regardant were serfs, *occupying the social space between a freeman and a slave* in that spacetime dimension. Nothing unusual, it's a historical fact that the wide majority of the medieval peasants were villeins. Thus, everybody was the same, enjoying the same status. There was no difference between them, being all equal. Therefore, no discriminations occurred and social justice was thoroughly respected.

Walking in a hurry, Hulla passed by an unknown monk, wearing a hood on his head. Tempted by demons, the woman stepped closer to him, dying of curiosity to find out the identity of that anonymous passer-by. Mercilessly struck by the evil eye, she fell down to the

ground and couldn't move anymore, murmuring the old song *Hey, Ukhnem!* Soon, her breath was taken away by a wind gust. A storm unleashed and the woman was carried down by the local river, and nobody could find her again.

The king was informed about the unusual event. It was a real tragedy that three families of reliable hard workers were left foodless. Besides, many women wanted to pass by the mysterious monk, to magically escape their daily chores. In the meantime, the monk in case vanished, leaving the village and the royal court in trepidation. This miraculous incident happened during the Pope Innocent the III-rd, former Lothar, son of Count Trasimund and Claricia Scotti. But nobody knows for sure, it could have been any other Pope.

The king of Sakkukutu wasn't in the best amiable relations with the Pope, be it Innocent or not. He couldn't stand his heraldry featuring two keys turned upside down, hidden in a bag. Two kitchen sink waste basket strainer grids were tied to the bag with a bloody red string finished with tassels. The keys and the waste strainer grids were completely made of solid silver and gold. That was outraging, taking into account that Jesus and the apostles were extremely poor, purposely not to offend the wide majority of the population living in

hideous poverty. Enraged, the kingsmen ordered the villagers to be proactive and revenge the death of the woman.

Extremely hungry and eager to be useful to their king, the men in the village began to investigate who was the mysterious monk. Because he vanished into the thin air, they found three young monks who lived with him in the same rented hut. Due to the fact that guilt was considered a catching disease in that dimension, the three young monks in the shared house were found infected and were taken away. In that spacetime, guilt could be transferred to individuals who had nothing to do with the crime, but, unfortunately, they were close to the criminal. Thus, they were put in prison for a few days, till the king was persuaded they deserve to die, in order to pay for the crime committed by the invisible culprit.

In the morning, all three guilt infected monks were hanged. In a flash, all the monks, students and strangers ran away to another county, without looking back. Surely, you don't need to look back when you are running forward. Those who ran away a few hours later were caught and executed for the same accusation - being guilt infected. As a result, the monthly rent decreased drastically in Sakkukutu, yet nobody wanted

to live there for ten years in a row. That's how long the infection needed to fade away. But the women are still searching for mysterious strangers to look at and die of curiosity, on the spot or a bit later. Since then, all the peasants disappeared, to break away with the disgraceful past.

THREE BEAUTIFUL HORSES

Intrigued by the amazing adventures he had, Labar TUR-ma Ria decided to keep a regular diary while travelling to the past. In his opinion, writing was a terribly boring activity, fit for very old individuals who could not enjoy any live action. But when he started doing it, he felt that building books from words is similar to constructing houses by laying bricks. He was a mysterious mason building invisible constructions, replicated in the reader's mind like some sort of magic. First, he moved slowly, as if afraid not to mismatch something. Then, in time, his speed increased and got satisfied with each filled page. Certainly, he kept improving and correcting it as much as possible, till he felt it's polished closer to perfection. Nevertheless, his first entry was this dreary text:

Three magic horses came to my threshold today. Their wings were torn apart by the strong wind and I could still see the stubs bleeding invisibly under their skins. One was white, one chestnut and the other walnut brown. I could not tell the age of the horses, maybe they were immortal as they seemed

not preoccupied with such insignificant matters. They had red strings around their heads. Whenever I turned my back to them, they rose slowly in the air, floating among the plum tree buds. It was middle April, sunny and rainy at the same time, and a few bud flowers, pinkish and delicate, more beautiful than precious stones, were in bloom.

The white horse was dancing graciously, turning upside down while floating, carefully avoiding to kick the flowers with the hooves. The wing-stubs were pushing from inside, pulsating slowly, to come outside. The harsh wind cruelly pushed them back inside. The white horse was neighing, maybe he said something, but it slipped by my ears, turned aside and closed within by a truck horn. Whenever the truck was rolling on the upper road, the ground was shaking, sliding onto itself, collapsing within. Annoyed by the noise, the white horse started to spit flames, burning the grass, blackening it.

He stood up motionless, looking at something on the ground, stoned with awe. I think he found the one memory I threw away last summer day, right before leaving to the other house, located far away, on an island. I banished it out of my head and mercilessly obliged it to bury itself underground. "Deeper, I said, deeper, maybe you will get enough rain drops during autumn to grow roots and resurface next year.

The horses were still there and they did not care what I thought about them. The white one could not move at all standing there completely stoned after swallowing my memory from last year. He could not fly anymore when I turned my back to him, but now I was floating upside down, with no gravity to hold me down. The earth was trembling, then it grew, rising above as if boiling inside, throwing me above the tree crowns. I am still there, doing straddle jumps in the air, screaming with joy, and nobody can see me or hear me, not even myself.

Tired of using the pen, he rested for a year, then recorded the diary directly into his grey matter cells, wherefrom he downloaded it by rubbing his own head with his personal fingers. Thus, the data would flow into his thumbs, terribly inflated and throbbing with pain, reason why he showed them to everyone passing by him on the zigzagged axis of time.

THE BOOT, THE BOAT AND THE RAT

One foggy medieval morning, Labar TUR-ma Ria found himself in a new place. Unbelievably, he was a willow tree, patiently sitting by a countryside river, his only ambition being to grow and reach the water course with its leaves. While focused to accomplish this lifetime plan, he witnessed an old worn Leather Boot set sailing on the local river, to see the world. Labar was stunned by so much naughtiness and unheard of recklessness. Why would someone or something ever wish to move?

The trees never change their location and stay where they appear for a lifetime, till they get completely dry and insensible. They never bother cherishing desires to walk from here to there, not even one step. In shock and awe, Labar TUR-ma Ria the willow was watching the scene unfolding in front of his unseen eyes, without being suspected one tiny bit.

But it seems this Leather Boot wasn't just any kind of boot, but a special one, at least that was his own opinion, deeply infiltrated into his ox leather texture. Last night, the Leather Boot kept dreaming about a high

tower on the sea-shore, converging into the Nile Delta, and a talking rat.

– It had a small button brown nose and he was pouring down something from a recipient into a boat that looked like a lamb.

– Not like a lamb, are you are nuts? I said lamp, not lamb, the Leather Boot replied to himself.

– Where are the oars? We are getting nowhere without them! cried the Boot in disgruntlement.

The Leather Boot has duplicated himself during a strange chemical experiment. Since then, he had a duckling's head with a triangular beak and above the duckling's head there was a little girl's occipital bone, partly covered by a hat.

– You can make alcohol with that boot, I think, said the Rat in the dream.

– That's what I heard. Afterwards, he said, you should carry the tower on a wheeled cart, and then, we see what's the meaning of that script with three vertical lines on the left.

– The rat nose is above the tower where we can clearly notice the nucleus of a territorial map, and then of course, we will see you later.

– T can be divided into 77 and later ...

– I said letter, not later! Are you stupid?

Then the Rat wanted to take a picture of it.

– How can it take a picture? It's a Rat!

– He can take it, if he needs it, the Leather Boot shouted to himself, visibly annoyed by being contradicted after each sentence.

– We are two here, don't act so selfishly.

– It's only me here, you are still me.

– No, I am you, but entirely different. Completely changed, Leather Boot Dois.

– That's what you're calling yourself now?

– As a matter of fact, yes. Do you have something against it?

– I am not opposing your desire. Do as you wish.

– Where are we now?

– Where we have always been.

– That's good. We will settle down here, build a train and establish a commercial company named East Company of the West.

– What about the Rat?

– He's not real. Can't you think?

– However, I want to be the head of the company.

– We will hold corporational elections and both of us are going to vote the favourite. We have to obey the commercial law of competition. You will aim me as

your electoral campaign target, and you will be mine.
1,2,3,4 here we go!

– Then we will sell train tickets to each other,
with extra price, to make profit.

– Yes, the more expensive, the better.

– We will both travel all over the world. *120 sailors and I was alone with my heart only as my companion!* he happily sang out loud.

The Leather Boot started to run, while its shade was strictly following, terrifying him. Traumatized, he divided into four smaller leather boots, running away from each other. In the meantime, Labar got old and dry from top to bottom.

NEEZA

Next day, he was Neeza, a shiny sphere lying hidden in a pile of unnoticed concepts, now considered extinct. A curiosity gust lifted her in the air more than half of a centimetre per hour. Bouncing a bit, she felt courageous enough to gush up. Neeza guffawed leaping in all sides, hitting a jackhammer, rebounding into a boomerang, finally stopping in a corner. From there, she randomly jumped in a zigzag trajectory every four centimetres, tracing equations with one unknown variable.

Squared Z plus 1 equals five. Then she traced squared N, till it collided with a black check pawn moved from the position H8. A crumb of a word dislocated after a linguistic accident hit it with the syllable KHU's pointy angle in the temple. The neurons shouted in fear pretending they lost consciousness. From Neeza's mouth palate, a cascade of red poppy petals flew down. Feeling lethargic, she fell asleep for a few centuries.

GURWINDER

The Great Wizard chose a new path in spacetime for Labar TUR-ma Ria. Generally, three space dimensions, plus one time dimension, make a normal earthly four-dimensional reality. This time, Labar was sent to a world so unusual that he couldn't even understand it. His new name was Gurwinder and he was something between a human and an Euclidean outline.

Even if he wasn't quite a geometrical figure, Gurwinder's circular soft face made him look like a fleshy ball, pulled down by his neck, body and members, a strange unburied root belonging to an incredibly small biological planet. His head stuck out, a huge spherical shape where blood vessels pump the red liquid, while the neurons transmit the sensorial data in a network of intricate, arborescent, nervous jungle.

One Monday morning, Gurwinder's head decided to change the usual state of matters and fall down by itself, considering he's the grey eminence of the entire body, the true leader of the much more inferior biological organism, merely an executant. When

Gurwinder's organism woke up just because the brain inputted this command, the head was still on, perfectly attached to the neck. The body limbs were calmly ordered to perform real actions, meant to fulfil the brain's wishes for that particular day.

– Wake up, open your eyes. Get out of the bed. Wash your circular face, let the water dribble down in round movements.

Gurwinder performed the actions commanded.

– Brush the teeth, again, the inner part of the left upper side. Walk to the kitchen!

Slowly, he walked to the kitchen.

– Stretch your arms and open the fridge, eat. Take your shoes, tie the laces. Wait, the other pair. No hair to comb. Follow the curb of your cranium gently. Open the car. Start the engine. Drive!

The car was set in motion and the brain was satisfied to drive the silver VW, invisibly though, safely hidden in the carcass of the skull, enveloped in an endless string of wavy grey and white matter. There were billions of cells cohabiting harmoniously, linked to each other, inputting, processing and retransmitting various data at a hallucinating speed. Fortunately, Gurwinder wasn't aware of what was going on inside his head, he was completely sure that when he moves

his hand, that was unquestionably because he wants to do so. And not otherwise.

The brain didn't allow Gurwinder to be aware of his plans. It had to be a total surprise, to bewilder him completely. At around 9.30, a few minutes earlier than usual, Gurwinder's car wanted to turn left on a small, insignificant street, when it hit another one, directly on the left side. Boom, boof! Taking advantage of Gurwinder's emotional shock, the head slightly disconnected itself from the useless body, allowing the brain to roll on the rough, dark-grey surface of the street, laughing out loud and hauling terribly:

– I have the guts! I have the guts!.

A creature crossed his way, it was a cauliflower filled with raw chicken-breast flesh, hopping on a mushroom leg. They bumped into each other and fell over. Not at all bothered, the brain was very excited and eager to get into direct contact with the physical reality, without using the disgustingly ignorant body. This was a dummy who consumed too many resources to put his ingenious plans into action.

No more body, that useless mountain of flesh, bones and organic waste, which needed an entire inner industry to perform a simple task like repeatedly opening and closing eyelids. The brain's frustration was

boiling slowly for twenty years, especially while Gurwinder was chewing food in a series of mechanical jaw movements, to facilitate mastication. Exasperated by this perspective, the brain never returned to his owner. Unaware of what's happening, Gurwinder jumped off a bridge, shouting out:

– Kungalaaaaa!

He expected the bridge to grow hands and pull him back. But the bridge has never had this intention.

THE DRAGON HORSE, THE GIANT AND THE WOMAN WITH A MASK

Labar TUR-ma Ria found himself on a new path in the infinite spacetime, near the ruins of an ancient temple. Nearby, a ceramic dwarf and a plaster ram standing up on a balcony were talking behind Jesus nailed to the cross. Within the ruined walls, a group of wooden beehives were secretly pouring sunshine into the creamy honey. Nobody realised the deception, so the bees went on with it. As soon as Labar materialized, two disturbed geese protested against, running towards him hissing, raising their heads menacingly. Five bees brutally attacked him stinging all over, to teach him a lesson. He rushed away and came upon two angry dwarves who took a landscape mound hostage.

Frightened, the mound succeeded to evade, leaving behind a poem written on a sheet of paper: *Now welcome, summer!* A community of deserted, used fridges were howling like wolves at the moon, depressed to be gotten rid by their human masters. Labar was amazed by the things he saw in that place. A willow stub was sipping water through a white electricity cable stuck

into the ground. A concrete board fence was leaning obliquely aside, furiously pushed back by three unhappy iron stakes.

Due to a bizarre phenomenon, he saw a dragon flying into the sky, ridden by a giant orc, who was holding a baldachin in his left hand. The baldachin consisted of three bars. Near the dragon, there was a woman. Her hair was down to the shoulders, with a fringe on the forehead, holding a mask near her head oriented aside. While flying, the orc was shouting out loud:

- Turn it upside down and roll it!
- Hey, 010, ff7510! answered the woman.
- Orange shade hex colour code.
- 515.

The dragon's tail was composed of two rivers, one of them became a woman's hand and the other one a foot. The dragons head was delicate, resembling a horse's head, with big, beautiful eyes. The she-dragon was spitting fire. Her three legs could be seen, the other one wasn't visible. She looked like a huge three-legged bearded dragon, a small Pogona lizard species. In the news, media broadcasted the ancient painting of Perseus and Athena holding Medusa's head. Awfully upset, Labar TUR-ma Ria became evanescence, regurgitating Urho Nuts Milkshake, wearing a Royal Purple robe.

THE EMPTY SQUARE

This time, Labar TUR-ma Ria became a geometrical shape, completely bidimensional and totally abstract. He measured 65 cm and was quite triangular, inclined to this form more than being round or rectangular. Due to an unconscious error committed, the geometrical authorities banished him to the Empty Square, where he was condemned to pan-fry onions for the rest of his Euclidian life. It could have lasted forever, if it weren't for an old woman he met on his way. While heading to the Empty Square, he passed by a carved wooden gate, which was crying hot tears.

– Why are you crying? asked the triangular prince.

– I am upset with my best friend, the lake, who wouldn't go to bed. He likes to party all night, disturbing everybody in the neighbourhood.

Depressed by the gate's tears, Labar went on his way. Darkness fell, so he jumped into a tree hollow to sleep. There, a decent community of wild bees felt bothered by his unexpected visit. Preparing their stings to attack, Labar proposed to tell them a fascinating story

in exchange for the honour of sleeping in their private property. The bees listened quietly to his story about the dragon horse. Enchanted by the way the ancient bees were pouring sunshine into their honey, the contemporary bees offered the guest a honeycomb.

In the morning, he set afoot, stumbling upon a happy goat on his way. Without being asked, the goat allowed Labar to milk her. Since Zeus was fed by Amalthea, the docile goats felt obliged to give milk to all the vagrants, hoping they find somebody important to help them when old and feeble. Embarrassed by the goat's generosity, Labar ran away without thanking, spilling milk on the ground, nourishing abhorrence for the ignorant goat.

– The goat is stupid and her milk could contaminate me with stupidity, for sure. Better throw it away.

Still despising the goat and himself, Labar came across a deep valley, on the bottom of which wild waters were boiling. An old woman was jumping on a narrow, wooden beam bridge, suspended above the valley, performing somersaults.

– Good afternoon, esteemed old lady.

– Good day to you, stranger.

– I am banished to the Empty Square and need be to cross this valley, could I use your bridge for a very short moment?

– No trespassing.

– Why is that, kind lady?

– This is my country and I have the sacred duty to defend it. Pass over my dead body.

– This bridge is your country? exclaimed Labar in wonder.

– Yes, this is my sweet, one of a kind country. You can't step on it.

– My name is Labar and I would humbly beg you to let me use it.

– No way.

– What's your name, fair lady?

– Manipunt. You know how to sweet-talk an old broad.

– I'm trying to do my best.

– You can pass only if you solve an unsolvable riddle, then go search for the knot in the bulrush.

– What would that riddle be?

– Knick-knack-paddy-whack.

– *This old man came rolling home* is the answer to your riddle.

– You must be really smart to be able to solve my unsolvable riddle, nobody could solve before. Now go search for the knot in the bulrush.

Labar looked around for a cattail bush, interlocked it into a complex knot using the nine-ply method and gave it to Manipunt. She allowed him to walk over, whispering a secret into one of his ears: "sa-lad". Against all odds, he arrived at the Empty Square, gloriously riding a cart pulled by a water buffalo's skeleton. The Empty Square was located inside god Min's huge furry boot, where the metatarsal bones rest assured. He found there heaps of sand and an old man hiding inside a cat. From within, he was calling names to everything and everybody getting closer.

– Bullseye! Marya! Ben! Lothal! Rub all! Q tip! Tek Tek! Ding Dong Son! Kaska! Tater Tot! Hatsheput! Bubba Gump! Anado! Sunda! Kinda! Tarim! Lastha! Meluha! Annimundu! Kap! Engish-iki! Ho!

– Why are you hiding in that poor cat, old man? asked Labar, terribly surprised.

– Because.

– Because what?

– Because the cat doesn't suspect a thing.

– Are you sure?

– Two years ago, the cat started to believe she is a mast and I am the wind blowing into it. *Sharp on the boat!* You see, my friend, this is a very confused cat.

– Does that entitle you to take advantage?

– This is my destiny. *Quarter view of a Cutter upon the Larboard tack close to the wind*, said the man retreating inside, relatively offended.

Without contradicting him in the slightest way, Labar proceeded to serve his time pan-frying onions, when the sky got all grey and cloudy with resent.

DUCKTOR SCHUURAV

For the next mission, Labar TUR-ma Ria had the honour to become Ducktor Schuurav, the most esteemed medical specialist in Kamadme Pa Rudain. Each and single day, he took a great deal of pleasure in operating patients suffering of hypothetical diseases, without anaesthesia. Operating under anaesthesia contradicted Ducktor's ethics to such a degree, that he threw off the window any patient insisting for this shameful, quite obscene procedure. Emanating perfect professional authority from a decorative lab-container pinned to his robe, he used a long metallic ruler to measure patient's wealth size.

Surely, for such a delicate enterprise, he was democratically assisted by the nurse, a Conceited Fat Cow currently in love with a greedy platypus. If satisfied with the wealth status, the Ducktor performed radiography by forcing the patients to swallow a plugged-in switched-on lamp. Afterwards, he inflated them by pumping polluted air inside their abdominal cavity, using an automobile exhaust pipe.

For this tedious operation, he was bored enough to ignore checking the patients guts. The love infected Cow also forgot about it. Tingling with sentimentality, the Conceited Cow did not pay attention to this particular surgical intervention, nourishing some well-known animosity against the insignificant Melancholic Frog. Actually, she felt quite harassed by his romantic advances, while illegally abiding in the pool by her house.

She constantly emptied the pool, chopping it thoroughly with a regularly sized baseball bat. Even if the water was gushing all over, quite a substantial quantity remained there to cover the blotted frog. Occasionally, the Cow hired a cistern driver to carry the pool away, after attaching a thick rope to it.

Nevertheless, it was a completely useless procedure as the pool was stubborn enough to persist there despite all the efforts, even if it unexpectedly changed its colour to bloody red. The Conceited Cow could not explain this strange phenomenon, blaming it on the Frog's melancholic mania. Although most of the frogs ended broken into small pieces, the Melancholic Frog was quick enough to avoid the bat fall on his spine by dancing a mad polka, while juggling four cups of hot tea.

That glorious morning, in the operation theatre, the light was naturally filtered according to the medical protocol, and the Frog was tied to the concrete bed by rusty chains, trembling with fear. He did not oppose the chains simply because the Cow applied them to his feeble, fevered body. On his chest, right above the love sickened organ, a big lock was finally fixed to regulate the heart rate, madly beating in love with the nurse. Deep into his throat, a plastic tube was thrusted.

– Behave yourself, stop shaking!

– Ahmahmaanhnhha, replied the Frog.

– For Mighty Scalpel's sake, utter sensible words!

What should I make out of it? Are you a Nitzschenian nihilist? Is he disabled? Ducktor asked the Cow whispering.

– He's intubated, Ducktor, reason why he cannot speak for himself, nor ruminante any logical thoughts.

– Any reasonable doubt?

– Nothing observed so far. Impossible, as he is terminally disappointed in love.

– Iiihhhhmm, coughed Ducktor. So, Melancholic Frog, your sadness is immense and, hhmmmm, there is absolutely no cure for it, other than disassembling you completely and reassembling you whenever convenient.

You consent? Ducktor goggled his eyes menacingly above the pink hearted mask.

– Aahmhmmhmmhmm, mumbled the patient struggling to free himself.

– We appreciate your consent, your courage will never be forgotten. I can assure you that a micro-replica of your imposing stature will be built by the renowned artist Paedo quirin from toes, leftovers from your skin and genetically modified molecules of your DNA.

– Consequently, we accept your agreement and humbly ask you to confidently press you finger on this card, to express your undoubted consent, said the Cow pulling Frog's palm against his will.

– Aaaahhhhhahhh, desperately cried the Frog, trying to free himself.

The Ducktor laid his hand on the rubber hammer and knocked him in the head exactly one hundred times, not more, nor less.

– Longitude and latitude, nurse! Ordered the Ducktor quickly putting on the welding screen protector.

– 26.8206 degrees NS and 1.1743 degrees EW.

Ducktor grabbed a pencil and outlined the coordinates, then took a pair of gardening scissors and cut deeply, mumbling a riddle in Latin.

– Mens sana in corpore sano!

– Aegrescit medendo! replied the nurse.

Blood was gushing aside as if from a spring fountain and the Ducktor was profoundly delighted. Singing the Green Nile waltz, he took the welding torch and inscribed his name on the patients liver, lungs and heart, never to be forgotten. The Ducktor was very proud of his work, totally convinced there was no greater doctor in the whole of Kamadme Pa Rudain, most of them a bunch of brain-hampered halfwits.

URMIAD2 METROPOLIS

Labar TUR-ma Ria woke up being a street in a new reality named UrmIAD2. She was a grey, concrete country way, on which all types of vehicles were rolling in high speed. Obliged to stay still and voiceless, she couldn't react to any of the things happening to her. This was, evidently, the manifestation of the implacable destiny, imposed by higher, unperceived powers. Whenever the vehicles went on her back, she felt a slight tinge on the surface. No other issues, only a soundless cough caused by the pollution nobody could sense, due to the laws of that particular reality.

She enjoyed when the village people were walking barefoot on her surface, in the summer. At that time, Ria could almost feel their soles stepping softly on the warm asphalt. In those moments, she imagined they were dancing happily. But lately, lots of cars and trucks were speeding on her back, and less people. How could the cars be aware of her discontent? The inhabitants didn't care about it at all, since the day their world was created in the way they find it acceptable. That was the certain moment when objects were pronounced

inanimate and brainless, or else people would certainly refuse to live in it.

At least, this is what God thought when he created the world in the best way to suit that race of humans or, at least, this is what they imagine, in the first place. The last UrmIAD2 male, as the first one, still considers himself God's best friend, who created the female to his personal liking and for his very personal use. What other purpose could a female have than to please a man, be it from UrmIAD2 or elsewhere? The same logic applies to all the other things, be it animate or inanimate, existing in that world, taken over by that particular race of humanity.

Subsequently, those humans ruled that the world belonged to them and they can do whatever they want with it, without the slightest contradiction, taking into account the presumption that God is on their side. Hence, the UrmIAD2 man perceived himself as an absolutely positive character, otherwise God wouldn't accept him as a trusted friend, delivering him whatever he wanted, exactly the way he wanted it. For everything bad occurring in their reality, they invented the devil to blame the evil on him, thus keeping man's image crystal clear and as pure as ever.

So Labar TUR-ma Ria was an inanimate small street located in a small village in that peculiar reality governed by those strict laws of existence, or else UrmIAD2 would stop working, crumbling to pieces. This is what man kept threatening about since forever, and the female, the animals and the inanimate objects permanently living there had no other option than to believe and be afraid. This is what Ria did for a period of time. Then, due to frustration and indignation, she got ill, all swollen with toxic retentions over night, doubling her size. Next day, the enlarged street became a major national road, turning the enraged village into a small, dusty, agglomerated town. Nobody noticed the change.

A HUGE ASH1TRAY

This time, Labar TUR-ma Ria was sent to a reality stranger than ever. This world was named Ash1tray, a three-dimensional place where everybody was smoking. Even inanimate objects, which usually can't talk or move, were smoking here, besides being rude enough to pretend they are alive and animate. Consequently, the air was so dirty, stinky and polluted, that nobody could breathe. As soon as Labar arrived there in the form of a talking paper guillotine, Le Balai, an old broom, asked him to get married.

– Time is short, let's take advantage and tie the knots.

– I am not in love with you, Labar replied.

– No need for love, we are here to multiply. We are going to create little paper guillotines with brooms attached, to clean the house. What do you say?

Labar was already running away without looking back, as far away as possible from the mad, old broom. He found refuge under a mismatched bridge, built from bricks and half masticated bread crumbs, punctured with leopard fangs. Trucks and cars were

hiding under the bridge, right where the horizontal line meets the vertical supporting pole. The shade was thicker and more reliable in that spot. They were smoking huge cigars put in their exhaustion pipes. In no time, a cistern unloaded hot chocolate on them.

No sooner had Labar TUR-ma Ria arrived there crawling behind a truck's tyre, than Police arrived, chasing away all the abnormal load vehicles and shipping containers. A horrible melee was caused, vans, trucks and cars rushing in all directions, colliding with each other. One by one, they were taken to the Police station. Half crushed, Labar remained under an old rear-engined Fiat Cinquecento's carcass, trembling with fear. Next day, the Revolution started.

All the public roads and highways were blocked by long convoys of vehicles, big and small, claxoning altogether. They revolted against humans and requested human society to respect their rights, and be allowed to smoke, due to addiction. From that day, the truck population looked down upon humankind, considered useless, unethical and ignorant. When humans opposed them arguing about the dangers of pollution, the trucks threatened they will stop transporting food and necessary items from foreign countries.

Their power grew overnight, reason why they created secret societies to defend their rights. Each member was requested to swear an oath to serve the trucks and their particular needs for fuel, service and maintenance. Plus, the network of streets, roads, motorways and highways had to be in pristine condition. Thus, all the roads had to respect the Law of the 5 Ks, according to the defined target of service life, to resist induced corrosion. Therefore, people could do nothing against it, but walk with clothes pegs on their noses. Running away from the public nuisance incident, Labar passed by a man dressed in a striped bath robe sieving the air around him.

– Air in my personal space is pure now, he whispered, shaking the sieve right in front of his nose.

The man's denture fell out of his mouth, screaming in horror, as if alive. Desperate with pollution, most of the human population was walking covered in sacks cut in front of the eyes, to be able to see. Intimidated, Labar TUR-ma Ria made best friends with a shiny, red public bus.

– I am Vincent, a bus, a volcano and a country. Ha, ha, ha! What do you say about that?

– Bus? That's better for me right now. Volcano doesn't sound too friendly. I feel at a loss.

– Hop in, I take you somewhere safe.

Labar TUR-ma Ria got into the bus, sitting down comfortably, without paying the ticket. Looking out of the window, he saw a house packed in a huge mosquito net, tied above, like a huge bundle. The bus stopped in a station and fell asleep abruptly. Embarrassed, Labar got off and walked randomly. A man offered him money to ring the bell on the 3rd street and ask for Thomas.

– Just tell him to have some common sense!

Labar TUR-ma Ria went there and rang the bell at the house number 47. An old man opened the door and Labar told him:

– Have some common sense!

– I sold it all in six million copies. Nothing left.

Then the old man went back inside to rest in peace. It wasn't the right century to talk about such things, the age of reason has not come yet. In no time, a plateau loaded with éclair cakes covered in a dense layer of sweet cream was running after him. Speeding, Labar was screaming in despair:

– Crime! Assassins!

Exhausted, terrorized and depressed, Labar TUR-ma Ria disappeared into the next sunset light, smothered by grey clouds of Carbon Dioxide.

URUA3 BUILDING

Out of the carbon dioxide clouds, Labar TUR-ma Ria materialized as a modern building in an urban dimension named URua3. It was an imposing construction built from glass and stainless steel bars, resembling a huge home appliance machine. Nevertheless, it was the shiniest on the main boulevard and one of the most attractive in town, standing apart in the ocean of reinforced concrete, engulfing all the nature around. Suspicious activities took place in that location, despicable things Ria was, unfortunately, aware of.

Each night, a team of dark gods' worshippers would gather and create fake Antidoron. The gang was led by a female bandit called Ana the Thief. She was the only one courageous enough to break into the church, to steal the Antidoron. This is the holy bread, blessed but not consecrated, meant to be consumed by those who committed mortal sins, facing sunrise.

One of the deadly sins was to despise life or to be disappointed with it. The other was to believe in the overpopulation conspiracy theory. The most serious felony in URua3 was to advocate for nature and against

development. But everything that contravened the interests of the public or private institutions and enterprises, owning the tallest, shiniest buildings, was considered the most heinous crime. In URua3, the greatest honourable merit was to generate income and profit, succeeding to enrich yourself and others, no matter the methods engaged.

The sooner, the better. Thus, the duty of each consuming URua3 person was to seek for the cheapest, best product, little money could buy. Advertising was used to advise people on the best choice ever to suit their needs, with the smallest investment. Hence, they were relieved by the long difficult procedure of reflecting upon the process of buying, being sent directly to the right place. Therefore, time passed incredibly quickly in URua3, and nobody could be ever bored, busy monitoring the publicity constantly flowing on all channels.

Many a grave sins were established by URua3 church patriarchs at the beginning of the institution, right before their Pope grabbed all the power in his two old rheumatic hands! Their patriarchal strategy was to create an army of ascetical, celibate, monastic individuals, to watch over the state of the affairs in URua3. Their main responsibility was to make sure

people live as they used to do in the glorious past, keep procreating and serving their purpose, set at the very creation of their world.

Anything less or anything else would be considered a terrible sin and a horrible hubris, a direct defiance of the gods' will. Hubris would translate into a treason of the divine dominion of gods, busy ruling each specific telluric realm. In ancient times, URua3 humans adored countless gods, so many that they lost track of their individual interdictions. Thus, those humans lived in constant fear that everything they do might be wrong. This situation suited their archaic system, founded on constant guilt and eternal remorse.

Though evolved enough to be called biped, their average cranial capacity was less than expected, no matter how many mustard seeds it could accommodate. But biped or not, the unadorned truth is that, as Aristotle explicitly put it, *Hubris consists in doing and saying things that cause shame to the victim ... simply for the pleasure of it. Retaliation is not hubris, but revenge ... Young men and the rich are hubristic because they think they are better than other people.*

Influenced by ancient philosophy and angered by what Ana the Thief was doing with her bandits, Labar TUR-ma Ria the building decided to move to a

different street, never to be found again. Whenever Ana was about to discover the new location, the building would instantly move somewhere else. Terribly offended, Ana lost appetite and stopped eating. The gangsters joined another gang and Ana became a common law-abiding citizen, like any other in URua3. Her name was Ana Tifa now and nobody knew or cared about her in the meantime or afterwards.

NAPOLEON DEAL

In a mental house asylum, there were quite many patients who were convinced they are Napoleon, the Great Emperor. Surely, absolutely all of them suffered of grandeur mania and other mental afflictions. One of them distinguished among the others through his ability to evade. Each night, he escaped running to the top of the hill, uttering an inspirational discourse to a ghost. Even though he was tied to his bed, he succeeded to free himself and run exactly there, with the utmost punctuality. He carefully passed by the Field of the High Sky, then by the Portable Mountain, climbing on the top of the Cockaigne Hill. At least that's what his followers stated in their Bible, but nobody knows for sure.

Not a soul suspected Napoleon Deal was the outer layer of Labar TUR-ma Ria, who was hiding there in plain sight, as the Great Wizard Darfur's secret agent Ze Rose Ven. One day, he vanished completely, never returning to the asylum. What happened? Terrorised by the birds singing, so much tranquillity and vegetation, Napoleon Deal fell ill. In desperation, more dead than alive, he ran away to town. There, he sat down on the pavement, deeply inhaling the pollution and listening to

the music of the street, mainly cars speeding and claxoning. His dream was to have a huge carbon footprint, the greatest of them all.

He was ecstatically seeping a cocktail of caffeine enforced with carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide molecules, dust, microplastic and other particulate matter. Ultimately, his upper heart chambers burst with joy and thus, he was taken to a different dimension. After his disappearance, psychiatrists and patients alike thought Napoleon was doing black magic. Patients related it to the miraculous freeing of Saint Peter, when his rusty iron chains were broken by the angel, and he walked free out of the bleak jail.

That's when the new religion was created, based precisely on this revelation. Full of zeal and gifted, his followers wrote their own Bible of Deal and published it in million copies. They mastered the religion admirably, excelling in convincing anybody of anything and dealing anything to anybody. Of course, right in the beginning, all transactions happened exclusively among the patients. Rarely a psychiatrist could be convinced that he can become a millionaire in a few certain moves, applying the right mental strategy. But they could be easily convinced to invest money in invisible portfolios managed by specialists in cryptic currency, a form of camouflage.

While still at the asylum, Napoleon Deal had fun persuading his fellow patients that they are frogs or dogs, and had them croaking and barking in no time. Soon, it became a cliché. Then, he used to laugh maniacally for five minutes with clenching fists, while his wisdom teeth grew longer, scratching the floor. Immediately, the psychiatrists began to analyse the clenched fist syndrome, added to his schizophrenia diagnosis. They are still analysing it, deliberately ignoring the teeth anomaly.

Back in those days, Napoleon Deal amused himself convincing people they were animals. "What you think matters. If you really think you are a frog, then you are a frog, and nobody should contradict you. It should be illegal to disagree with people and their freedom of choice". His meaningful words were cautiously written down in the Bible of Deal. In time and completely without Napoleon's consent, this religion irradiated and a new age started. Slowly, people were allowed to opt for a new preferred form of existence.

As expected, most of the males wanted to be bulls, while the females chose to be cats. They enjoyed sitting comfortably on the couch, purring. Then a scandal broke when the bulls realised there are not enough cows on the market. A pop culture movement was initiated to convince women to opt to be cows, for

free. The social conflict was calmed down with a nuclear war. This incident happened between the 4th and the 15th of October 1582, during Pope Gregory XIII, and those days were already erased from the calendar, for being redundant and irrelevant. But nobody knows for sure, due to naturally occurring errors in translation, serial copying and copycatting.

LUT-ERRA PATUCO

In his next adventure, Labar TUR-ma Ria materialized as Lut-erra Patuco, the Woman with Muddy Bootees. Her nickname was related to the fact that she always wore muddy shoes, she couldn't stand clean ones. Besides hating clean shoes, Lut-erra Patuco was the inspiring leader of the new religion of the Divine Conception. The wide majority of the population in that village followed her blindly, consenting to her sayings more than necessary. Her fame grew so quickly, that she was made the Spiritual Leader of the village and the Legendary Midwife of Mitra, the Mightiest god.

Their mitral murmur was heard from great distance, while the believers flowed, in line, from the upper side left corner of the temple to the lower side one. Surrounded by a devoted cortege, Lut-erra the High Priestess was listening to the heart of an untouched virgin with a rubber elephant-shaped stethoscope, uttering mysterious oracle prophecies about the past.

The philosophers in the village started to whisper against her cult, adored by the largest segment of the rural society, replying that reproduction is mainly

animalic, not divine. Any logical deduction comes to the conclusion that reproduction is best achieved by animals, and while they do it so admirably, they need no education, nor romantic affection or money. Subsequently, reproduction should be considered animalic, not divine. There are no gods reproducing in plain sight to be seen by humans, so obviously gods do not commit reproduction, thus it cannot be called divine.

Socratitsa, their most esteemed representative, was summoned to Lut-erra's humble temple build from pink marble and gold, for a dialectical approach. Asked why reproduction is deemed animalic, Socratitsa said animals excel in reproduction without any medical help, love affairs or social rules whatsoever. The final argument was uttered raising her hand, while asking a rhetorical question. Knowing *that dialectic is a closed fist and rhetoric is an open hand*, Socratitsa realised by now that her efforts are in vain, so she asked this blasphemous question:

– If reproduction is divine, then why do humans eat the offspring of the animals and their parents at the end of the fertile cycle? In other words, why do humans eat the result of the divine reproduction of animals? Logically, if the human reproduction is divine, then all the forms of reproduction are divine, which implies that

animalic reproduction is divine, too and thus we commit sin eating them.

The horror created by these questions and sentences is quite impossible to be expressed in the right words. In that space and time, animals' existence was ignored and their dedication was considered an act of bestowal, a form of selfless sacrifice for the benefit of the humanity. Undoubtedly, humanity was the child of god Mitra the Merciful, and thus the divine status was sorted. Well, not for all of them, but for quite a few, precisely those less exposed to weather elements.

Thoroughly unimpressed by Socratitsa's discourse and scandalised by the idea of divine reproduction of animals, Lut-erra's followers grabbed her, together with some philosophers who happened to be around. They burnt them at stake, not before revoking their human status, including them in the livestock category in the local official acts. Immediately afterwards, they were set on fire as unworthy hulks of meat. Some of the followers, hungry enough, took a bite or two, tempted by the fried bacon-like smell.

Thinking over night, completely unaware of this behind-closed-doors debate, a different group of philosophers changed their minds, considering reproduction as being animalic and divine at the same

time. They were saying that animals and humans reproduce in the same way, thus reproduction is animalic, human and maybe divine, all concomitantly. But because no gods were ever seen reproducing or doing anything else, they shouldn't be included in the discussion. How can we reasonably pronounce on the invisible phenomena? Actually, there was no need for gods, because humans were considered divine enough through their ability and manner of reproduction, which was quite limitless and truly unstoppable.

Irritated by this view, Lut-erra's followers took these philosophers and stretched their inferior and superior members, to improve the elasticity of their minds. This solution proved satisfactory, coupled with monitoring their evolution on the right way, by sending two witnesses in their houses to supervise the culprits each moment. One was at service in the daytime, the other one at night, listening to the way they constantly repeat out loud their new conviction: "Reproduction is divine and not animalic". Finally, there were no philosophers left in the village. Even today, in that particular space time dimension, the act of reproduction is considered truly divine, obviously human and absolutely not animalic at all.

SIX PEAS IN A POD

Shabaria was a place where bird-headed people lived. This country was just like any other, except for the fact that all the buildings and streets were suspended on high, strong concrete pillars. Daily, these people were busy searching for food. As expected, food was not easy to be found, especially because they preferred raw peas. This time, Labar TUR-ma Ria was unlucky enough to materialize as six peas in a pod in this location.

His family name was *Pisum Sativum* and their mentioning by Theophrastus and Columella in *De Re Rustica* was their greatest pride, certifying their ancient noble origin. Even the Roman legionaries were eager to eat them, to supplement their daily food rations. Lately, in the Middle Ages, Charles the Good, Count of Flanders, made history mentioning how the peas helped people fight famine. For this, there is need for many peas, picked up one by one, comfortably arranged in their pods.

Surely, Labar TUR-ma Ria's tragic destiny was worthy of being analysed in one of Aeschylus' famous plays, written many centuries ago. Unquestionably,

being a vegetable is not easy, as it's plain to see that everybody wants to eat you, crunching you raw, boiled or fried, peeled or not. Being chopped is not funny, either. Thus, all Labar TUR-ma Ria had to do all day long was to avoid being pecked by the beaked creatures. Indubitably, it wasn't easy, mainly because a vegetable cannot think, brainless as it is.

If the vegetables had brains, they would have been able to fight for their right to be left to rot in peace. But that wasn't the case, so all human races and animals felt free to consume delicious vegetables, whenever they fancied. The Great Wizard Darfur's hidden and malicious intent made Labar TUR-ma Ria taste the bitterness of being a helpless, edible vegetable in an extremely cruel world of hungry consumers.

First, he appeared above the ground as a small green shoot in May. His native place was a flat-bottomed trench 5 cm deep and 15 cm wide, in a sunny spot. For a young pea pod, this was a whole world in a nutshell. Absorbing nourishing moisture from the soil, he grew steadily day by day, till he could confidently climb and roll on a bamboo cane. His secret ambition was to grow as tall as the imposing trees he saw near the fence. As you can imagine, Labar TUR-ma Ria lived all his life in

a garden, by the house belonging to one of the bird-headed people named Dau Ha Lan.

His confidence derived from the fact that he was a round variety of peas, much better than the wrinkled or the dwarf type, which all pea-folks despised profoundly. However, people and animals would eat any kind of vegetable, regardless its category. All that mattered to them was the delicious taste and the feeling of satisfaction. Summer arrived and it was high time for Labar TUR-ma Ria to fulfil his destiny.

When Dau Ha Lan stretched his hand to pick him, the fragile pod broke and all six peas dropped on the ground, whispering: *Do you know there is this other world, very silent, which penetrates yours?* Unnoticed, Labar TUR-ma Ria rolled down in a crack in the ground and slept there, dreaming he would grow roots next spring. Dau Ha Lan couldn't understand the song, he couldn't even hear it. His hand grabbed another pod, being happy to have a good crop that year. Six peas in a pod meant nothing to him, out of a few hundred kilos of fresh green peas.

ASPHALT LAKE

Labar TUR-ma Ria found himself in the middle of a peculiar lake. As incredibly as it may sound, it was a lake entirely made of liquid asphalt. Every now and then, huge chunks of solid bitumen were forming on the surface, floating randomly. He climbed on one of them and travelled to the other side of the lake. There, Jmuina - that was his name now - found shelter within a cave. Could he find clean water to drink? It was very hot in that environment and he could see nothing else than arid land, rocks and salt. He couldn't possibly drink liquid asphalt, regardless how thirsty he was.

Stepping inside the cool cave, he discovered quite a cosy room with beds, benches and tables carved in stone. It was really beautiful. Aside, he saw a string of clay pottery, lined *under the steps which go eastward*. Searching inside, he found a parchment roll. Curious, he sat down to read, only if he could understand the characters.

– 3QI5! Eureka! he shouted turning it topsy-turvy, happy to make something out of it. Lajju, me nyuam, huav. Iriaji!

In that moment, a strong earthquake began to shake the cave as if it was a toy. Frightened, Jmuina fainted. When he came back to his senses, he was somewhere else. Walking around, he came upon a man who was digging into the ground, cutting it into square bits. Whispering "fumi, fumi", he scratched them all with his nails, set them on fire, then buried them back in the ground. The rising smoke was carrying meaning, going up to the sky in shapes and letters. It was telling an unintelligible story nobody could understand.

Another man was hammering the rocks of a mountain. It took ages, and by the time he finished, the letters were not readable at all. Distressed seeing all of this, the prince turned into a flock of 47 sheep grazing on the meadow. They were looking for lost keys in the grass. It was early June and it wasn't easy.

TWO FAT BUGS IN HALFA BEWIL

In his minecart, Labar TUR-ma Ria materialised in a new dimension named Halfa Bewil. It was the country of the biped insects - partly human, partly bugs. As you can imagine, he was one of them for the moment. Therefore, he was a big fat bug, at work together with Eurupulos Εὐρύπολος, his son-in-law. They had big, round bellies, trying to find balance on two short legs, two small hands and a tiny spherical head. That day, they were called to an old lady-bug, to install a door canopy. They brought lots of tools with them, grinding, cutting, screwing, making a terrible noise.

Before reporting for work, they ate whatever fell into their hands, stuffing their bellies with sausages, salami, white bread and butter, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, beer, sweets, soda. Food was cheap, so what could stop them from engulfing it? After all, the stomach can accommodate large quantities of aliments, changing its shape like a sack of potatoes.

That was the case with Labar TUR-ma Ria the bug, tormented by an atrocious yearning for food. All he wanted was to eat, there was nothing else in his mind,

occupied by this grotesque desire. But to satisfy his monstrous needs, he needed money, lots of money. Thus, his target was to get rich, as quickly as possible. For that, Labar TUR-ma Ria the bug bought many inspirational books to read, eager to learn how to get rich. *To be or not to be rich is about how to think rich to be rich* was one of them, a booklet defining richness as a state of mind.

This tiny volume contained a system of getting rich and a pragmatic formula. The system consisted of four huge pylons of richness. "If you use only one or two of them, you will surely make enough money. But if you use all pylons, you will absolutely get rich. Do not refuse a pylon, stick to the formula and get rich in no time. Nothing is easier when you use the magic formula of getting rich. You just think you are rich and you are immediately rich. But if you think that you are poor, you will be poor forever. Keep in mind, if you really believe you are rich and act as if you are rich by pretending that you are rich, then you are definitely rich because the others think you are rich even if you live on debt". Labar TUR-ma Ria blinked several times, bewildered.

To understand more, he opened a new inspirational book. "You can add more pylons to the system and become the richest in the Universe. Do not

let anything stop you, not even a curious comet or an envious asteroid. Spread the richness and happiness around you by making others rich", he read. He blinked again. What could he make of this sentence? "Maybe I am not too smart", he thought, disappointed, throwing the book away.

All the notable bugs in the community began to apply the system to their individual lives. They borrowed large amounts of money to act rich, to make it seem they afford to live in luxury. As a result, they were all heavily indebted, paying all earned money on interests. Most of them lost sleep in the night, because of the high interests on mortgages and various loans. The demand for psychotherapy and alcohol skyrocketed. In desperation, some of them started to practice yoga, to search for inner peace.

Newly arrived in the club, Labar TUR-ma Ria had to meditate at the precious guidance based on overcoming mental blockages and spreading the richness around, by making others rich. "If you have blockages in your mind, you are doomed! The blockages keep you marking time in poverty. Unblock your mind! If you do not make others rich, you yourself will never be rich", warned the twentieth booklet. Finally, he seemed to understand something.

All he had to do was to unblock his mind, make others rich, then they will make him rich, too. He smiled satisfied with the revelation. Now he defeated the last blockage in his mind, from now on he will evidently grow rich the way an apple tree grows apples. He tried again for a few days, yet no result, he was still as poor as a mouse in the church.

This is what was going through Labar TUR-ma Ria's insect head - food, massive quantities of delicious food, and inspirational quotes about how to get rich. In panic, he went to the main temple to pray to get rich quicker. He kept imagining himself rich, yet he was poor. Something was not working well in the magic advertised in the inspirational books.

Was it something wrong with himself? Thinking about it, he entered the temple, where a congregation of bugs were praying and singing together. Right away, he went to confess on his inability to imagine better and his incapacity to get rich. The insect priest Jiju Shogorath listened to him, then got awfully bored to hear the same words over and over again, and scolded him, losing patience:

– Try harder. Why don't you try harder? It's nobody's fault that you are poor, but your own!

He felt hopeless and terribly guilty, a sinner and a loser. A group of priests were advising pious bugs on how to best imagine they are rich in order to get rich without impediments. Kudur-Mabug, a young locust priest, was reading the Sacred Script in the pulpit:

– Their purpose was to work evil amidst eternal confusion, chapter 7:1 from the Creation Legend – Merodach the Dragon Slayer! Beware the vengeful preparations of the dragon! Peace be upon thee, reader! As I was repeating thousands times, there are two categories of biped bugs – those who are poor in spirit and those who are rich in spirit. Blessed are those rich in spirit, because theirs will be all the richness in this world! Grab it all, devoted believers! Greed is good and makes a bug rich in no time! Do not dilly-dally, a bug's life is short! Dear believers, it's useless to work hard your whole life, because it's impossible to get rich this way. To be rich, you need people to work for you, not the other way around. For their effort, you pay them a small part, and the most substantial it's for you to keep, sharing it with your management. First, you pay the management from your wages, then you will grow. Be patient and servile with the management, but be ruthless with your competition, they are after your clients to steal them and you might lose it all. Clients,

more clients! his coarse voice echoed, hitting against the temple's walls. The more, the better, no matter the cost. Use your workers properly, make them work twice as much for half the wages. This is how you get rich. There is no other way. Divide your employees and dominate them by spreading hatred and conflict among them. Spy on them copiously. Fire anybody who isn't willing to throw his son into the river for you. That is true obedience.

– Repent, sinners! said Bikonomik Otto, an older earwig priest. Your faith is as weak as a dandelion puff ball! You don't have enough faith, so suffer the consequences! You are condemned to be poor forever if you don't try harder! Imagine, imagine, imagine every second of the day and of the night, and you will become rich! You, fools, do you imagine every moment that you are rich? If not, it's your own fault for staying poor, you bunch of worthless bugs!

The bugs applauded really intimidated, thoroughly frightened and so frenetically, that they fell asleep in a few seconds, immediately afterwards. It was late in the night, anyway. When the sun was about to rise, they were all awaken for the main ritual by a series of brass trumpets and a herd of elephants stomping ground. The High Priest was an ant called Kedar Lao,

busy trying to domesticate a stone carved dog. The dog did not react at all, but the individual perception can be quite subjective.

After multiple attempts, it seemed the dog moved a bit. Whoever could not see the dog moving was considered backwards and retarded. As a punishment, he would be banged in the head with an iron candle-holder thirty times, to put the brains back into the right place. So none of them believers dared to admit the dog wasn't moving. When the ant-priest finished taming the stone dog, it was high time for their sacred, ancient ritual.

They climbed on swingback stepladders and uttered the most atrocious invectives to the sun, right into his hot, fiery, astral face. Clearly, the ritual consisted in swearing at the sun, calling it appalling names, in the most frenzied hatred. Moreover, they made obscene signs with their hands and bodies, to humiliate the sun. They even spat into its celestial face. Obviously, the bugs detested sunshine. The sun could not hear or see them, due to the distance of 150 million km. So far away, the celestial body was totally safe from the angry, disturbed bugs.

That activity went on till sunset, when all the devoted bugs headed home, confident their greatest enemy disappeared from in front of their eyes due to the

magic ritual and their individual power. Because the sun wasn't replying to their sayings, they interpreted it as a proof of weakness and cowardice. Surely, the sun wouldn't care about a bunch of bugs, biped or not.

Unfortunately, a giant was passing by, chasing woolly buffaloes in the mountains, and without noticing the bugs, he stepped on them. A *Lacerta Viridis* blue-headed lizard ate them on the spot. For bugs, the lizard was a feared dragon. *Labar TUR-ma Ria* miraculously survived for the moment, with an amputated leg. But he learned his lesson: never swear at the sun, he seems to be the dragons' best friend.

RANDOM DARWINIAN EVOLUTION

Riding her wooden minecart, Labar TUR-ma Ria noticed a huge dark forest, populated with crooked shrivelled trees, chipped tile fragments, terracotta remains, rusty kitchen sink waste basket strainer grids and broken siphon traps. She stopped near a hospital wreck, where a few chickens were heatedly talking politics in front of a bottle-shaped television set plugged in the ground, scratched by numerous claws. A furious turkey named Stella Kurkha, who undergone numerous plastic surgery operations, was the live-show moderator. Watching from behind standing up on her hands, Ria noticed Kurkha was two-headed.

She had a beautiful woman's face looking to the left and a bearded-man's profile on the right. The female's hands were hidden under the robe, while the man recently attached a brand new arm, flexed from the elbow. Kurkha interrupted the show for breaking news. A truly indignant incident took place on a desolated plain near the forest, where several men assassinated an innocent window, as a sacrifice for their god Sin. The

victim was screaming out "Giammu! Giammu!", till the wooden frame broke apart, but nobody cared.

Annoyed by the broadcast series, the weeds started a mass micropropagation process, without asking for an international referendum. Biting tiny bits from each other, the weeds mutually chewed themselves politely, then got contaminated with various DNAs, causing an uncontrollable collective metamorphoses process. In chain reaction, all weeds lost their identity and original appearance.

Shocked by the rapid change process, Ria sat down in a corner in Eka Pada Rajakapotasana pose, dressed in a rosy, embroidered, cashmere lightweight waffle robe. Meditating in the style called Resolve to Evolve, Ria pondered on the interconnectedness of all living beings, fleshy or vegetal. Finally convinced, she jumped into an empty pond, wailing "Advaita! Advaita!". In an instant, she had a vision and her dilated, expanded inner self could see a meadow where the inhabitants built their houses with the roofs buried into the ground. Each house had a big glass window in the front, for entrance, and a few tiny doors instead of windows.

Strange beings were walking upside down on their hands. She saw bird-headed men, dog-bodied snakes, rats with horse tails, corn silk hair and tree

leaves on their heads, bob cats with pig hooves. There was a chaotic mixture of all sorts of animals, insects, snails and sea creatures, cohabiting with mythological beings from the past. She noticed bugs carrying snail shells, centaurs, mermaids, women wearing snakes on their heads, men with donkey ears, huge feathered snakes, monsters, orcs, dwarf dinosaurs, giant termites, elephants as small as a mouse, winged fish and other unimaginable creations.

In awe, Ria saw a talking fox with human hands making a speech in front of an audience of men standing up on dog feet, which were barking all together, making an awful riot.

– Silence, please, we are trying to teach our unidentifiable language, cried out the fox. When you master it, you can talk without hearing yourself.

The teacher, a gorilla smartly dressed in an elegant suit, wearing tie and spectacles on his nose, appeared to teach the lesson that day. A fly was writing the main facts on a high, oblique wall, sustained by wooden poles used to impale unwanted, sceptical ideas. For the practical part of the lesson, a flea demonstrated how you can fly to the sky, loaded with 99 kilos of iron. The pack of partly-human dogs began to bark even

louder, growling, showing their fangs and ripping each other to pieces.

Scared, Ria woke up from her vision and looked at herself. Without reasonable doubt, she realized she became a huge silkworm with eight limbs, coyly retracting inside whenever birds were singing unannounced. The head was regularly rotating clockwise, murmuring "ommmmm, ommmm". A man appeared out of nowhere and began to weave a silken scarf. Taken by surprise, her own reflection in a chipped mirror fragment set the worm on fire, burning all selfish thoughts she was currently ruminating, turning them into silvery, shiny cinders. Illuminated, Ria saw a rotten wooden door thrown on the ground. She opened it and entered another dimension.

COUNTLESS

Arriving abruptly in his minecart, Labar TUR-ma Ria noticed a community of men who had the most solemn responsibility of counting leaves of grass. This world was Amara-he'a. Due to endemic misogynism, they wouldn't allow females to take part in this paramount activity, convinced their frail brains would fail during the unusual mental effort. Instead, the females were encouraged to invent several types of engines and mechanisms that were left to corrode in collective cemeteries. These were established especially for mechanical entities nobody really wanted.

The sites were called Incessant Reflection Camps and all women were motivated to create countless mechanical projects that were dumped afterwards. Males articulated long solemn discourses about the true destiny of the mechanicals, highlighting repeatedly that the tarnish is a sign of blissful wisdom. The fact that the mechanics kept silent about it was considered the utmost proof of intelligence.

Most surprising was the fact that females were spherical, moving in circles, while the males were

parallelograms, connecting each other's sharp angles. They were delicately sliding obliquely in chain, from one spot to another, in a diaphanous, imperceptible dance. It was stipulated in their Constitution that the opposite sides of a parallelogram are of equal length and the opposite angles are of equal measure. Nevertheless, when resting, the males would open like envelopes to contain the females within.

An unexpected event occurred in Amara-he'a when a female refused to be contained. She inexplicably changed her behaviour, moving in zigzag. Moreover, she requested a new male to contain her by shamelessly winking her left eye for five seconds and a half. Public indignation was expressed in pulling out an odd number of grass leaves, while the males were screaming out in pain. This was, unquestionably, a grievous national tragedy.

Beyond doubt, their law certified that the sum of two odd numbers is always even. The outrage was enormous and totally devastating. It was the first time in a millennia that the traditional social order was compromised. Thus, the rebel woman had to be punished exemplarily. Therefore, she was ignored for a few centuries, the necessary time for the grass to grow back a catrillion times.

CONVERT LOST CHAINS TO FILES

The Great Wizard Darfur was considerably dissatisfied with Labar TUR-ma Ria's overall activity and his developmental change KPIs. Most unsatisfactory was his disregard for the six P's management rule which regulated the administration of the people with the accurate principle, policy, process, practice and purpose. Added to the main P's, there were the secondary ones - the three P's of the power, profit and pressure. All these concepts were a hotchpotch in Labar TUR-ma Ria's mind.

He liked profit the most, that slice of goodies intended for his own satisfaction only and his innumerable wishes. Gaining profit became a religion, and all that mattered was to make profit, needed or not, regardless the methods used. In order to profit well enough, he had to act according to the main entrepreneurial functions – risk taking and innovation, meant to increase quality and to lower costs of investment.

Being part of those admirable agents of change, he was endowed with unique abilities to perceive what

others can't, and daringly act upon that personal perception. Therefore, he performed multi-tasking functions in various communities, regardless their stage of development. He was capable of doing it all, proud to contribute to the economy and nothing else. Evidently, as Machiavelli put it clearly in the book suggestively titled *The Prince*, the end justifies the means. It was a cruel game where others were left bankrupt, causing them to lose sanity and start shooting their family members, then killing themselves in the end.

Still, no feelings of guilt or remorse, only satisfaction of being the absolute winner. Nobody ever cared about the ones who lose, worth to be despised and repudiated. Maybe the losers were the winners once, destroying others in the same brutal manner. In that dimension, certain individuals would do anything for profit, and that's why many were sent to prison to be sexually re-educated. Every now and then, some of the formerly acclaimed winners were bungee-jumping off the buildings without rope, thus proving unshattered confidence in their own strength and goals.

All leaders fail when they have to balance their individual yearning for power and profit with the pressure of the general population's wellbeing. Consequently, the wizard summoned Labar TUR-ma

Ria to an improvement CPD seminar in the present time, situated almost between the past and the future, imperceptibly to the right. There, he instructed Labar how to convert lost chains to files and vice versa. This operation could be accomplished by closing eyes, chanting a series of random magic formulas, while repeatedly cracking fingers:

- Checking file system on DDEB.
- The type of the file system is FAT32.
- One of your risks needs to be checked for consistency. You may cancel the risk check, but it is strongly recommended that you continue.
- GLASS will now check the risk. Listen!
- Volume Serial Number is 097C-114E.
- Convert lost chains to files (Y/N)? Yes.
- 557056 bites in 17 recovered files.
- GLASS has made corrections to the file system.

Can you see it?

- 3955228672 bites total risk space.
- 1277952 bites in 3 hidden files.
- 32768 bites in 1 folders.
- 819200 bites in 18 files.
- 3953065984 bites available on risk.
- 32768 bites in each allocation unit.
- 120704 total allocation units on risk.

– 120638 allocation units available on risk.

Overwhelmed with data upload, Labar's brain shut down, causing him to faint, snoring in the sound of silver coins clinking.

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